

By Daniel Uria | Nov. 23, 2015 at 5:09 PM



Shane Farberman, also known as "Doo Doo the Clown," came to the rescue of two women who were being attacked by a man in an alley, pulling them into his vehicle and calling 911. Photo By Doo Doo The International Clown/Facebook

TORONTO, Nov. 23 (UPI) -- A famous Canadian clown helped save two women from a violent attacker in downtown Toronto on Sunday.

Shane Farberman, also known as "Doo Doo the Clown", noticed a shirtless man jumping over cars and pushing pedestrians, so he decided to investigate in his Hummer. He

then witnessed the man violently confronting two women in an alley and was able to pull them into the vehicle and drive them to safety.

After Faberman was able to rescue the women and call 911, the man attempted to break into the vehicle, knocking off one of the side view mirrors.

When police arrived the man had to be restrained by eight officers before being taken into custody.

"It wasn't a laughing matter...it was pretty terrifying," Faberman told CTV Toronto.

On Monday, Faberman was commended by the city for his bravery, but above all else he was thankful that no one was hurt.

"Thank goodness the worst part of it is my mirror," he told CP24. "If that can be the worst, that's it."

Faberman, a husband and father, also said that he didn't even consider the fact that he was still in his clown suit while jumping into action.

"I didn't even think of me being in clown [costume]. I've been doing this for 32 years, so I forget that I'm in costume when I'm to there in between shows. It was a no-brainer," he said.

The attacker was identified as 25-year-old Wei Gou. It is believed that he was under the influence of illegal drugs when he attacked the women. He was charged with two counts of assault and one count of mischief.

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Company claiming ownership of jets 'abandoned' at Malaysian airport

upi.com

By Ben Hooper | Dec. 11, 2015 at 2:44 PM

NOTICE UNDER CIVIL AVIATION ACT 1969



The Kuala Lumpur International Airport took out ads seeking the owner of three planes it said were abandoned at the facility for more than a year. SWIFT Air Cargo has since come forward to claim them. Photo courtesy Malaysia Airports

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, Dec. 11 (UPI) -- The mystery of the three abandoned cargo jets at a Malaysian airport may have found a solution as a company has come forward to claim them.

A company called SWIFT Air Cargo has come forward to claim ownership of the three Boeing 747-200F cargo jets after the Kuala Lumpur International Airport took out newspaper ads seeking the owner of the planes.

The airport said the planes have been parked at the hub for more than a year and officials were unable to identify their owner or owners, but SWIFT said on its website that the company has been in contact with Malaysia Airports officials for months.

"SWIFT is understandably very concerned when MAHB (Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad) declares to the world that 'exhaustive steps' were taken to find a contact person, yet SWIFT has been meeting with MAHB on a consistent basis," the company said.

The company said it has been meeting with officials, including the chief operating officer and the general manager of the airport.

"Based on this evidence, SWIFT is unable to fathom the reason for MAHB's declaration that it has taken 'exhaustive steps' without being able to find a "contact person" when all along, SWIFT was fulfilling its obligations," the company said.

The website said SWIFT has the necessary documents to prove ownership of the planes to airport officials.

The ads taken out by the airport said the planes would be sold within 14 days unless the owner came forward.

"They've yet to pay the parking fee -- where do we send the bill?" Malaysia Airports general manager Zainol Mohd Isa said earlier this week.

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District Attorney Olcott had half a dozen witnesses in the case on hand to-day and took them before the Grand Jury. An indictment was found in a few minutes against Mrs. Nack and Thorn. The police up to to-night had not recovered the watch and clothing of Guldensuppe, which Thorn pawned. They did find some pawn tickets in Thorn's pockets. These, however, were for things Thorn owned himself.

The work of detecting the bottom of

We may think that as a society we have outgrown beliefs in evil spirits and lucky amulets, but in fact most of us are still practising some of the superstitions of our medieval ancestors, without even knowing it. Here, historical novelist Karen Maitland reveals 10 weird, but common, superstitions that persist today.

This article was first published in October 2014

1) Evil spirits lurk in Brussels sprouts

Do you dread the annual ritual of preparing the mountain of Brussels sprouts for that family Christmas dinner, painstakingly cutting a cross in every stalk before you toss them in the pan? Why do we do that? People claim we cut a cross in the bottom to help the sprouts cook better, but you don't find them served like that in most restaurants.

Without knowing it, you may be following a superstition dating back to the medieval times, when it was believed that evil spirits or tiny demons hid between the leaves of lettuces, sprouts and cabbage. These spirits could enter anyone who swallowed them, making the person ill or at the very least giving them stomach ache. So before cooking, a cross was cut in every sprout or cabbage to drive the evil spirits out from the leaves.

2) Do you suffer from Triskaidekaphobia?

That is, the fear of the number 13. It was thought the origin of unlucky 13 came from the Christian belief that 13 people sat down at the Last Supper and Judas was first to leave the table to betray his master, Jesus. So for centuries, hosts avoided having 13 people seated round a dining table, convinced that the first person to leave would die within the year. Indeed, 16th-century witch-hunters often tried to claim there had been 13 people at a gathering – proof that the accused were witches in league with the devil.

But fear of 13 predates Christianity. The ancient Romans believed that 13 was a bad omen, foretelling ill-fortune and death. The Vikings also hated 13, because in Norse mythology a banquet was held for 12 gods at which the trickster, Loki, appeared uninvited, like the wicked fairy in Sleeping Beauty, and as a result the beloved god, Balder, died.

3) Toss a coin and make a wish

Visit any famous pool, wishing well or fountain, and you'll see modern coins glittering at bottom. In ancient times, pools and wells were thought to be home to water spirits or deities, and offerings to them were thrown into the water to ensure fertility or success.

During the medieval period many ancient sacred springs became associated with saints who replaced the water spirits. People still came in the hope of finding cures or good fortune and, just they had in pre-Christian times, brought offerings to the saint, usually in the form of a bent pin or coin. If you install a wishing well today people will still throw coins into it.

4) Tossing the bride's garter

Many brides wear a lucky garter under their wedding gowns. In ancient times, bridal garments were considered blessed, and the bride would have all her clothes ripped from her by the guests on the wedding night as everyone tried to snatch a piece. Gradually attention focussed on the bride's garter-ribbon – a symbolic of sexuality and fertility.

In medieval and Tudor times, unmarried men fought for the bride's garter to ensure they would be the next to find a beautiful and fertile wife. Bachelors even mobbed the bride as she stood at the altar, throwing her to the ground and ripping the garters from her during the wedding ceremony. The church protested, and the custom evolved to the groom removing the lucky garter from his new wife in the bridal chamber and tossing them down from the window to the waiting men below who shouted words of encouragement.

5) Touch wood

Many of us still say 'touch wood' when talking about future plans, even if we don't actually perform the action: "It's supposed to be finished by Friday, touch wood".

It is one of mankind's oldest and most enduring fears that if we talk about any good thing, something will happen to curse it. Lurking spirits or demons will jinx our success, or a jealous neighbour might curse us with the evil eye.

The wood we used to touch would have been from one of the sacred trees – oak, ash or hawthorn – because the spirits of those trees were thought to have the power to protect us from the evil eye or demons. Today, any wood will do – people even touch wood-effect plastics.

6) 'She's giving me the evils'

A remark often heard in Eastenders, meaning someone is glaring at the character as if they wished them harm. From ancient times, nearly every culture around the world has believed that certain people have the power to cause their victim to have an accident, fall ill or die just by looking at them with malice.

Years ago, if you thought you had an evil eye but didn't want to hurt anyone, you were advised to let your first glance in the morning fall on a tree or shrub that would consequently

wither and die – a great excuse for your gardening failures.

To protect yourself against someone 'overlooking' you with the evil eye, you could spit, cross your fingers, carry iron, wear a red thread, or, as they do in many parts of southern Europe today, wear a blue bead or the image of an open hand.

7) Holy-stones or hag-stones

Pebbles or small stones with a natural hole through them are frequently used as key rings or hung up near doors and windows for decoration. But this is more than just a convenient way to keep track of your keys – historically, such stones were thought to have powerful protective properties.

Keys were attached to holed-stones to guard the locks they fitted against robbers trying to break in, and to prevent evil spirits entering through the keyhole. The combination of iron and stone was thought to protect against all kinds of ill luck. Holed-pebbles were also hung near the doors of houses and animal-byres to protect the entrances from witches and demons.

8) Cutting the wedding cake

Back in Roman times, the wedding cake was made from wheat, fruit, nuts and honey – symbols of wealth and fertility. The cake was broken over the bride's head to ensure a fertile and prosperous marriage, and the guests scrambled to pick up the crumbs of good luck, which is why even today small pieces of wedding cake are sent to guests who can't attend.

Some modern brides are returning to the medieval custom of having a stack of individual cakes instead of a single large one. Originally these were fruit buns, heaped up in high stack, which the bride and groom had to leap over without toppling if they wanted to ensure a happy and fertile marriage.

By Tudor times, the stack had transformed into a single tiered cake that the bride cut, usually with the groom's hand over hers, in the belief that if the bride didn't cut the first slice, the marriage would be childless.

9) Mistletoe

From Saxon times, if mistletoe was hung over the door or above a hearth, it was a sacred oath that the host would not kill his guests, even if they were mortal enemies, and would defend them against attack for as long as they remained beneath the mistletoe. The mistletoe pledge was often used at times of great feasts, like the winter solstice, when fights could easily break out after heavy drinking.

According to Greek myth, the twin berries of mistletoe are the testicles of Uranus, which were severed and fell into the sea, becoming the blood and white foam from which Aphrodite was born. In Norse legend, mistletoe was dedicated to Frigga, also a goddess of love, so we kiss under the mistletoe, removing one berry for each kiss, till no berries remain and kissing must cease.

10) The Devil's meat

In the 1st Millennium AD, the weekly feast dedicated to the Viking god Odin was a very lively and popular communal celebration in Britain and Scandinavia, and the church found it almost impossible to stop people enjoying it. In AD 732, in an attempt to wipe out the practice, Pope Gregory III instructed Boniface to forbid the highly-prized food that was at the heart of this 'pagan' festival – horsemeat.

The church declared that horsemeat was the Devil's meat, and anyone eating it was sacrificing to pagan gods. The belief grew up that those who ate this 'heathen' meat would be struck down by sickness or cursed with terrible misfortune. Perhaps this deep-seated superstition is one of the reasons the British still find the concept of eating horses hard to swallow.

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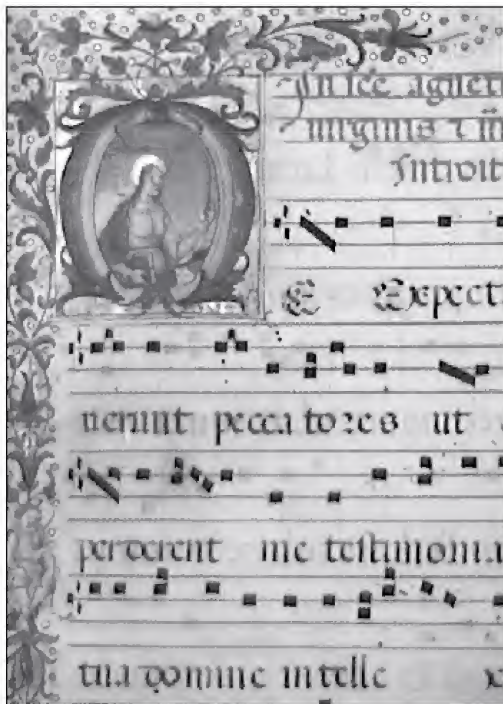
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Medieval Music Manuscripts

TREASURES OF SIGHT AND SOUND

Sarah J. Pruett



St. Agnes
Choral Service Book. Italy (Rome), 1440-99 (folio 1r)
University of Houston, Special Collections
Gift of Fred Albright

The modern musical notation system developed over many

centuries, but its roots lie in the medieval world.

Medieval music began as a part of the Catholic Church and flourished as the power of the Church grew. Eventually, music spread into the secular world as a burgeoning art form. Like other forms of medieval manuscripts, those containing music provided an opportunity for artists (other than the composer, author, or poet) to express themselves through the decoration of the manuscript. The medieval musical manuscripts that remain hold insights not only into the music of the past, but also into the artistic practices of the past.

Written music did not appear in the Middle Ages until the reign of Charlemagne (768-814) and the "Carolingian renaissance." Charlemagne encouraged and fostered learning and the arts during his reign, hoping to re-establish the traditions and achievements of Classical Rome, including a system to write music that derived from a lost Greek system. The system of notation that developed during Charlemagne's reign aided the oral tradition of music that existed prior to the Carolingians.

Music played a central role in the liturgy of the Catholic Church. The Church developed many different types of liturgical manuscripts to complement the extensive liturgy and quickly became one of the largest manufacturers of musical manuscripts. Worship for the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages fell into two main sections: the Mass and the Divine Office. The Mass is a

symbolic re-enactment of the Last Supper of Christ. The central events are the consecration of and consumption of the bread (Eucharist) and wine. The form of the Mass became fairly standardized by the tenth century, although some regional variations did prevail. Some parts of the Mass remain constant from day to day and are called "common." Other parts changed from week to week or even service to service, depending on the feast day or season being celebrated, and are called "proper!"

The Divine Office was a series of services that took place at certain times of the day, and its main function was to allow for the recitation of the Psalms. These services are called the canonical hours: Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Compline. During the Middle Ages, each of these services was performed daily by monks and the clergy. Matins, the longest of the canonical hours, was the first performed each day, usually beginning around two or three o'clock in the morning, with the other services following every three hours, ending with Compline. When private devotional books of hours became popular in Europe around the thirteenth century, lay people began observing parts of the Divine Office².

The musical manuscripts used by the medieval Catholic Church (also called liturgical manuscripts) were divided by use for either the Mass or Divine Office. For each service, there was a book that contained only the texts used usually by the priest or person conducting the service, and a book containing the text and the music for those performing the musical parts of the service³. A gradual is the main musical book used in the performance of the Mass, taking its name from one musical element in the Mass, Antiphonaries or antiphonals contain text and music for the Divine Office and are named for the antiphon, a melody that frames the singing of a Psalm verse that was integral to the performance of the Divine Office⁴. Liturgical manuscripts are several volumes long because of the length of the liturgy.

Most of the liturgical books, especially

the graduals and antiphonaries, are arranged according to the liturgical year, divided into sections for the Temporale, Sanctorale, and the Common of Saints. The Temporale or temporal encompasses the "proper" Christological feasts, such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, that are celebrated universally across the Catholic Church⁵. The Sanctorale is the celebration of the saints' feasts, with the exception of the feasts that fall between December 24 and January 13, which are included in the Temporale. The Common of Saints includes the feasts for the saints who do not have a separate feast. These were feasts for general groupings of saints like bishop confessors and virgin martyrs⁷. The contents of the Sanctorale are variable depending on the monastic order and region of the manuscript.

The University of Houston Italian Choral Service Book in this exhibit contains the Sanctorale for St. Agnes; St. Lawrence and the Finding of the Holy Cross; the Temporale for the entire year, beginning with the Vespers before Pentecost; the Office of the Virgin; the Office of the Dead; and the Common of Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and Virgins. Also included is a portion of the service for the dedication of a church. Material for the Mass on Holy Saturday and part of the services for Easter Sunday were added later, a common practice as the liturgy changed. Because books were so expensive, when changes were made to parts of the liturgy, material was either added to the end of a manuscript or inserted within the existing manuscript.

The actual size of liturgical manuscripts varied depending on their function. Usually missals and breviaries are smaller in size, because they were generally used by only the one person officiating at the service. Graduals, antiphonaries, and choir books were often much larger, depending on the size of the group using them⁸. Unlike modern choirs in which each performer often has his or her own copy of the music, medieval choirs often read from the same book, propped up in front of the group. If the choir was very large, the choir

book would need to be extremely large, so that everyone could see it. The University of Houston's fifteenth-century breviary page in this exhibit (which measures 5.75 inches by 8.25 inches) was made for use by one person, while Rice University's musical manuscript leaf, probably from a gradual (which measures 14.5 inches by 20.5 inches), was probably used by a large medieval choir.

As with most manuscripts, the amount of decoration depended largely on the wealth of the patron and the book's intended function. Musical manuscripts made for daily use in a monastery or smaller church would have very little superfluous decoration in the margins. A manuscript for display in a cathedral might have a very elaborate decoration scheme with rich borders and miniatures. Because choir books and other musical manuscripts became sources of pride for communities, they became more elaborate.⁹ The time period in which a manuscript was produced could also influence the level of decoration; the later Gothic and Renaissance styles were much more ornate than earlier decoration styles.

One decorative element common to almost all musical liturgical manuscripts is the initial or large letter. The initial could be decorated simply with a variety of motifs or it could be historiated or inhabited.¹⁰ Initials were also used as visual place markers, to indicate a new verse, service, or day. There is a definite hierarchy of size and decoration according to the function of that initial. The first pages for the most important feasts have the largest and most elaborately decorated initials within the manuscript (in a gradual, it is usually the introit for the first Sunday in Advent; in an antiphonary it is usually the first responsory of Matins).

This hierarchy of initials is apparent on the Rice University manuscript leaf. This page contains the introit, gradual, and gradual verse for the first Sunday in Advent. The first initial for this feast, the "A" in the introit, is very large and much more elaborately decorated than the rest of the initials on the page. There is no doubt that this marks the beginning of a new and important feast within

this manuscript. On the same page there are other initials that stand out. The large blue "U" at the bottom of the page marks the beginning of the gradual for the feast, and the red and black "V"s mark the beginning of the verses for the gradual. These other initials are larger than the other letters around them, but are much smaller than the "A" that marks the introit. Nevertheless, when a performer was following along as a member of a large group, these initials would provide a quick reference to help him keep his place.

The Rice manuscript page dates from the fifteenth century, and its decoration offers clues to the function of the entire book as well as to the community that originally owned that book. Analysis is limited because there is only one leaf and not the entire manuscript. The large size of the leaf indicates that it came from an equally large manuscript. This suggests that the book might have been made for a sizeable religious community or church with a substantial choir. The decorative scheme leads us to consider two further possibilities concerning its use. The flower pattern inside the "A" marking the beginning of the introit is very elaborate and certainly eye-catching. While the decoration is lovely, the lack of gold leaf and the simple hierarchy of the design are neither the richest nor the most ornate produced in the fifteenth century. Thus, it is equally possible that the manuscript was made for use by a choir on a daily basis or was instead intended to be displayed in a middle class or poorer community of some size.

The University of Houston's choral service book, on the other hand, contains more elaborate decoration on its first page. The size of this manuscript indicates that it was used by a small to medium-sized community. The first service in this manuscript is the Sanctorale for the feast of St. Agnes, and it is the martyred Agnes who appears in the initial. The illustrations are drawn and painted in detail. Gold leaf is employed both within the illustrations and as part of the ornamental border. Later in the manuscript there is another highly

decorated page, with St. Helen holding the True Cross, although it is not as elaborately ornamented as the first page. For a small or medium-sized community, this choral service book could have been a treasured display copy. Indeed, there is some speculation that this manuscript originally belonged to a small seminary in Rome. The manuscript is also in excellent condition, which speaks to the care with which it was treated. Thus we may conclude that the University of Houston choral service book was either a luxury book for display or was very infrequently or carefully used, allowing it to remain in such excellent condition today.

Although most medieval musical manuscripts contained the Catholic liturgy, not all manuscripts from this time period dealt with the celebration of the sacred. The Middle Ages sustained several vernacular traditions. There were numerous poets and musicians who wrote and composed during the Middle Ages, often in their own tongues (as opposed to the Latin of the Catholic Church). Musical entertainment was very popular in medieval courts, and from the eleventh to the thirteenth century a new musical tradition developed in southern France, that of the *troubadours*. The *troubadours* were professional poets and sometimes nobles who wrote poems with accompanying melodies that dealt with topics of courtly love, service to a noble lord, travel, treason, and loyalty. The *troubadours* were often commissioned by a nobleman or prince to write works for entertainment at banquets or elsewhere, but they usually did not perform their own works. *Jongleurs* (or minstrels) were professional singers and musicians who performed these works and were usually of a lower class than the *troubadour* composers. Although the melodies have not all survived, there is strong contemporary evidence that indicates that these poems were performed to music¹¹. This tradition moved into northern France and eventually to Germany, with each region developing and adding its own elements to the tradition.

In Germany this tradition became known as *Minnesang* (love song), and began in the late twelfth century. These works were written in Middle High German and took many forms. In addition to the traditional courtly love songs, there were songs written from the perspective of both men and women, dancing songs and songs about the Crusades¹². In this exhibit, the facsimile of the Manesse Codex represents the *Minnesinger* tradition and depicts Otto IV playing chess. This collection of songs was written between 1300 and 1340 in Zurich and contains 137 portraits of *Minnesangers* and their poems¹³. It is one of the largest collections of vernacular poems surviving, although the music is not included in this work. Most of the miniatures in this work depict the composers of the poems in everyday scenes or in scenes from their works.

There was a vast musical tradition in the Middle Ages that developed from the simple and beautiful plainchant, most containing the Catholic liturgy. Others contained vernacular songs composed for the entertainment of princes at court and banquets. These manuscripts provide not only a link to the music and art of the past, but also insights into the worship and entertainment of the Middle Ages.

¹ Jeremy Yudkin, *Music in the Early Medieval World* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), 87-88.

² Yudkin, 146-199.

³ Consuelo W. Dutschke, "Liturgical Manuscripts," in *Leaves of Gold: Manuscript Illumination from Philadelphia Collections*, ed. James R. Tanis and Jennifer A. Thompson (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001), 130.

⁴ Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum in association with The British Library, 1994), 62.

⁵ Yudkin, 146-147.

⁶ Brown, 120.

⁷ Brown, 113.

⁸ Dutschke, 130-131.

⁹ Dutschke, 131.

¹⁰ Robert G. Calkins, "Choir-book," in *The Grove Dictionary of Art Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed 10 November 2003), <http://www.groveart.com>.

¹¹ Yudkin, 252-255.

¹² Yudkin, 314.

¹³ "Documentation for the Miniature 'German Minnesang'" (Accessed 17 July 2005), http://home.arcor.de/mustangace/sca_arts_illudacu2.htm

Bizarre England: 11 of the strangest attractions and traditions in history

Sunday 7th June 2015

historyextra.com

From bear wrestling to a church for dragon slayers, the history of England is suffused with peculiar attractions and traditions. Now, a new book pulls together some of the most curious



c1930: a man wrestles his tamed bear. (Photo by Imagno/Getty Images)

In *Bizarre England: Discover the Country's Secrets and Surprises*, David Long introduces readers to some of the oddest and most interesting sights in England – from Devon's Gnome Reserve and Britain's smallest pub to a subterranean ballroom.

Here, writing for *History Extra*, Long guides readers to 11 of the more unusual and curiosity-inducing corners of the country...

1) Motorway madness

The first thousand miles of England's motorway network had a bizarre genesis in 1938 after being sketched out by official surveyors using children's crayons on a map given away free with *Tit-Bits* magazine. One might guess that the M1 would have been the first to launch, but it was beaten by a stretch of the Preston bypass (now part of the M6), which was officially opened by Conservative prime minister Harold Macmillan in December 1958. Until 1965 there was no upper speed limit, although motorists could be fined £20 for reversing along the carriageway.

2) A flying monk

The first Englishman to fly with wings was a Benedictine monk called Elmer [or Eilmer] of Malmesbury. According to a 12th-century document, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, England's homegrown Icarus threw himself off the tower of Malmesbury Abbey and managed to glide around 200 metres before crashing to the ground and breaking both his legs.

Little is known about the design of his homemade wings, but the author of the document was also a monk in the same order, and while he didn't witness the flight personally, he almost certainly knew the valiant adventurer in old age.

3) A secretive duke

In an area of the Midlands still known as the Dukeries, the eccentric fifth Duke of Portland (1800–79) employed an estimated 15,000 workers at his seat, Welbeck Abbey. Over several years they constructed an underground ballroom; an underground riding school large enough for 100 horses (although His Grace never rode); three underground libraries – each of which was painted pink – and a series of tunnels.

The latter – some large enough to accommodate a carriage – were designed so that the secretive duke could travel beneath his estate without being seen. He never married.

4) Third-class passengers

In 1838 there was a third class, as well as first and second, on English railways. So-called 'penny-passengers' stood up in open wagons, but could spit and smoke to their hearts' content until 1844, when a change in the law required them to be protected from the weather and provided with seats. A penny was by no means cheap for a labourer or someone in service, but the same legislation allowed them to carry up to 56 lbs of luggage (25 kg) free of charge.

Conditions on board trains gradually improved, but third class wasn't abandoned until 1956.



An 1873 engraving by C H Seers after F Holl, showing a group of passengers waiting on a station platform for a train. In the centre a porter crouches next to a female passenger, listening to her talk. The sign behind them indicates that the passengers are travelling third class. (Photo by SSPL/Getty Images)

5) No time for TV

In 1922 the newly formed BBC had only four employees, and an annual licence cost homeowners 50p. On first being invited to witness John Logie Baird's game-changing invention, none of the employees found any "excitement or interest" in the idea of television, and the decision was taken to ignore the new technology altogether and stick with radio.

More bizarrely still, a few years later, at 6.30pm on 18 April 1930, an announcer reported quite seriously that as there was no news at all that day, and so listeners should instead sit back and enjoy some piano music.

6) Strange fashions

One of England's strangest fashions developed from the public's slavish determination to

mimic Edward VII's wife, Alexandra, in everything she did. Following a bout of rheumatic fever the queen was left with a pronounced limp, which many thousands of women suddenly began to copy by wearing odd shoes beneath their crinolines. This made their faltering steps seem awkward but natural; something done not to ridicule the queen, but simply because fashionable members of the public wanted to be as much like her as possible.

7) Pubs from the past

Perhaps the strongest contender for the title of England's oldest pub, the splendidly named Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem, is built into the sandstone cliffs beneath Nottingham Castle. There, an old brewhouse once stood, and a sign proclaims that the pub dates to 1189.

Such a foundation date is quite plausible, but there is no documentation to support it, and as many as 20 other pubs – two of them in the same city – make their own claims for being as old, or even older. The name is a reference to the Crusades, but is usually shortened locally to 'the Trip'.

8) Lincoln's towering spire

The completion of Lincoln Cathedral's soaring spire in the early 14th century made it the first building in the world to exceed the height of the nearly 4,000 year-old Great Pyramid at Giza. Had it not been destroyed in a violent storm in 1549, at 160 metres the spire would have remained the tallest building on earth until 1844, when it was overtaken by the Washington Monument in the US. To put the height into context, St Paul's Cathedral is just 111 metres tall, and Westminster Abbey a mere 69.

9) Historic bodybuilding

The world's first bodybuilding contest was held at London's Royal Albert Hall in 1901, and proved so popular that some of the hundreds that queued to see it had to be turned away. Participants were called upon to mimic classical-era statues in front of judges who included Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and a German named Eugen Sandow, who modestly presented the eventual winner with a sculpture of himself.

The Prussian-born Sandow, whose real name was Friedrich Muller, achieved international fame for his poses, but after cheating on his wife was buried in an unmarked grave and largely forgotten.

c1905: winner of the Sandow bodybuilding competition, Mr Murray. (Photo by Reinhold Thiele/Thiele/Getty Images)

10) A Victorian elephant



In the 1850s, Manchester's popular Belle Vue Zoological Gardens boasted kangaroos, rhinos, lions and bears, as well as other entertainments designed to attract a prosperous middle-class audience. However, exciting plans to acquire an elephant ran into trouble in 1872 when the animal, which cost £680 and was named Maharajah, charged the train on which it was to travel from Scotland.

The incident caused so much damage – to the train, not to the animal – that it was decided that Maharajah would instead have to walk down from Edinburgh. Its keeper, Lorenzo Lawrence, accompanied the animal on the 10-day journey.

11) Man v animal

In 1888, the *London Daily News* carried an account of a race held between a bee and a bird. The smart money was on the pigeon – a species famed for speed, stamina and an uncanny navigational ability – but remarkably a bee was first across the line, winning by a full 25 seconds.

A few years earlier, in 1880, a London man had raced a black retriever in the Thames 10 miles from London Bridge to North Woolwich Gardens – the dog won. And in 1890, on a Saturday night at the London music hall, John Picton wrestled a bear in the hope of winning a few shillings. He died of his injuries at the London Hospital.

***Bizarre England: Discover the Country's Secrets and Surprises* by David Long is published by Michael O'Mara Books. To find out more, [click here](#).**

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The Facility-Built in 1969 and fully renovated to government standards in 2012. The bunker can withstand a 20 kiloton nuclear blast has 3-ft thick walls, 4000-6000PSI hardened concrete, decontamination showers, new secure air intake systems, luxury apartments that sleep 13, 5 staff bedrooms, home theatre seats 15, 6 HVAC underground systems, spring system throughout building to absorb blast, conference rooms, first-aid nurses room, 2dsl broadband lines with static IP address, meets all EPA standards, modernized commercial kitchen, 100 yard outdoor firearm range.



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More Details MLS Data Last Updated:

11/27/2015 03:44:47 AM

- Listing Information
- Style: Other
- Stories: 2 Or + Stories
- Water: Private System
- Sewer: Septic Tank



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_Photo_1



_Photo_2



_Photo_3

- Neighborhood: Gated, Undergrnd Utils, Security
- Setting: Other
- New Construction: More Than 2 Year
- Mountain: 0
- Acres: 20 Or More Acres
- Cooling Type: Central Electric, Humidity Controls, Solar A/C, Zoned
- HeatingType: Electric, Solar, Zoned
- SQFT Source: Builder
- SQFT Total: 16,000

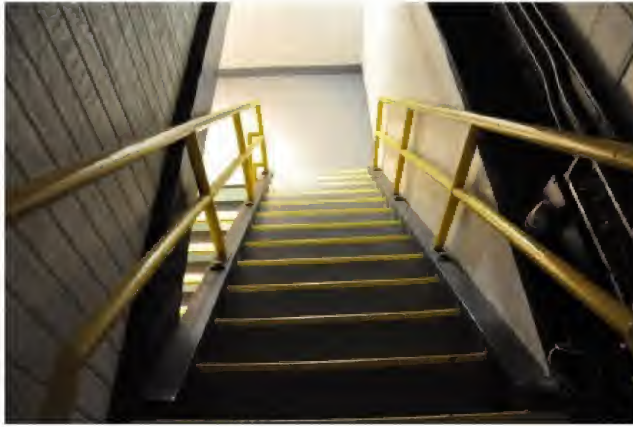
- Lot Features
- Lot Description:Level, Level Driveway, Private Backyard
- Lot Dimensions:33+/-
- Lot Acres:20 Or More Acres
- Lot Size:20+ Acres

- School Information
- Elementary: Tift - Other
- Middle: Tift - Other
- High: Tift - Other

- Room Information
- Total Bedrooms: 12
- Bedroom Description:Bdrm On Main Lev, In-Law Ste/Apt, Mstr On Main
- Bathrooms: 12 full 0 half
- Laundry Type: Main Level
- Master Bathroom Description: Double Vanity,Shower Only
- Laundry Description: Main Level
- Kitchen Description: Breakfast Bar, Cabinets Stain, Counter Top - Stone, Island
- Dining Description: Seats 12+
- Room Description: Computer, Exercise Room, Great Room, Library/Office, Media Room, Recreation Room, Workshop

- Bathroom Locations: Lower:5.0, Main:0.0, Upper:7.0

- Interior Information
- Interior Features: 10 ft + Ceil Upper, 10 ft+ Ceil Main, Hi-speed Internet
- Construction: Other



_Photo_4

- Appliances: Dishwasher, Double Ovens, Elec Air Filter, Elec Ovn/Rng/Ctop, Elec Water Heater, Intercom/Radio, Sec System Owned, Smoke/Fire Alarm
- Heating: Electric, Solar, Zoned
- Cooling: Central Electric, Humidity Controls, Solar A/C, Zoned
- Basement: Finished, Full, Interior Entry
- Fireplace: 0
- Fireplace Desc: None
- Handicap: 32 inch or + doors, Bath Acc, Wheelchair, Wide Hallways



_Photo_5

- Exterior Features
- Exterior Features: Fenced Yard, Out-Buildings, Satellite Dish
- Carport: 0
- Parking Description: 4 + Car Garage
- Roof: Other
- RoofType: Other
- Construction: Other
- Pool Description: None
- Num of Garage Units: 0
- Carport Spaces: 0



_Photo_6

- Financial Considerations
- Price: \$17,500,000
- Tax: 0.00
- Tax Year: 2015
- HOA: 0

Listed By

Sister Hood
Buckhead

Office: 404-233-4142

Direct: 404-233-4142

Cell: 404-401-1163



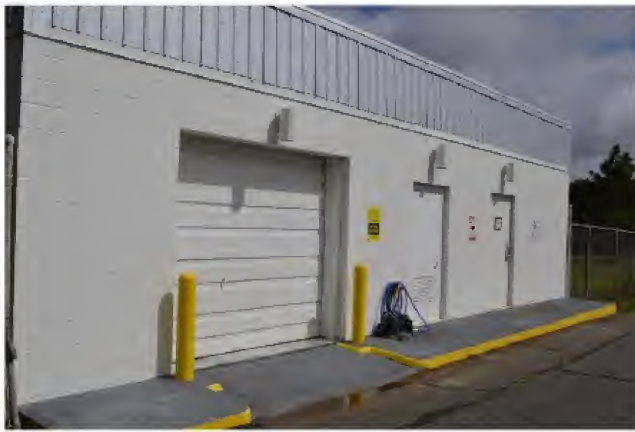
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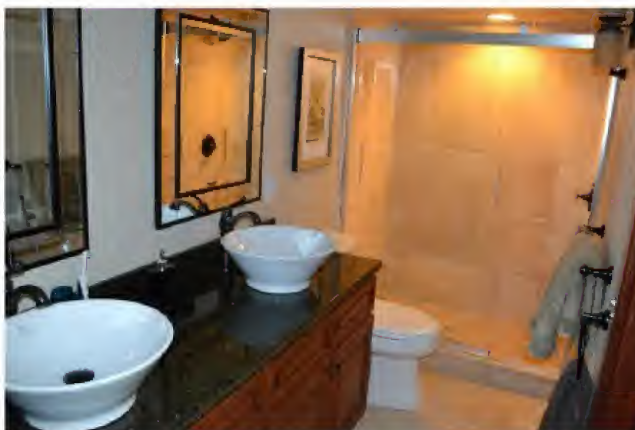
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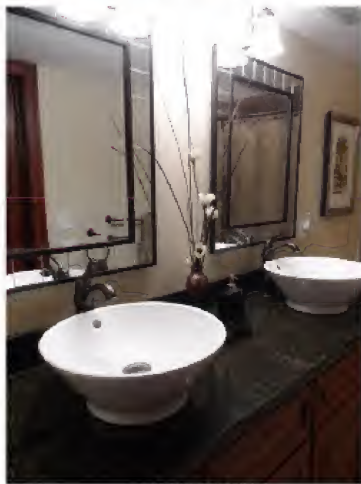
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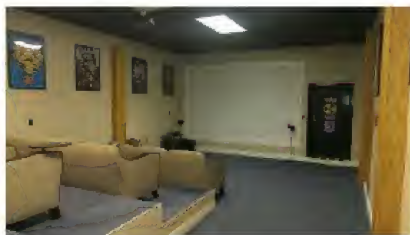
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_Photo_24

14 weird things that have happened in November through history

Sunday 1st November 2015

historyextra.com

How to win the next rollover

In November 1996, three people – two neighbours from Tipperary, southern Ireland, who shared a ticket, and another person who bought a ticket in County Waterford, southeast Ireland – shared the Irish Lotto jackpot of IR£1.6 million. The numbers the winners chose were based on the dates of the birth, ordination and death of St Pio of Pietrelcina (1887–1968), the Italian Catholic priest and mystic better known as ‘Padre Pio’.

A Lotto spokesman told the press that the use of numbers relating to saints was common among players. “The very first winner of the Lotto was a woman in Donegal who used the birth dates of her favourite saints,” they said.

Insuring a grim outcome

Jack Gilbert Graham of Colorado stood to inherit a substantial sum of money upon the death of his mother (some reports suggest \$150,000), but he decided to up the stakes. On the morning of 1 November 1955, he escorted his mother to Denver Airport, carrying the suitcase he'd packed for her, which was, in fact, filled with dynamite.

United Airlines Flight 629 exploded in mid-air, killing Graham's mother and 43 other people. Forensic examination of the site aroused suspicion, while witnesses came forward to say that they'd seen Graham at the airport frantically buying insurance policies from a vending machine (they had vending machines for everything in those days).

The criminal trial, one of the earliest to be televised, was a national sensation. Graham was found guilty and executed in January 1957.

Constable foretells election result

The US presidential election of 1976, held on 2 November, pitted the Democrat James Earl ‘Jimmy’ Carter against the incumbent Gerald Ford. This was the year in which the US was celebrating its bicentennial (200 years since the adoption of the Declaration of Independence), while a rather more low-key celebration marking the 200th anniversary of the painter John Constable was marked in Britain.

The Constable bicentenary, it was claimed, predicted the outcome of the presidential contest and the Democrat victory, because Constable's most famous painting, *The Hay Wain*, shows a farm cart(er) going over a ford (crossing).

James 'Jimmy' Carter and Gerald Ford taking part in the first televised debate between candidates for the post of president of the United States during the 1976 election. Carter became 39th president. (Photo by Universal History Archive/Getty Images)



Lady Chatterley chatter

On 2 November 1960, an Old Bailey jury ruled that DH Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) was not obscene. The case against Penguin Books famously included Mr Mervyn Griffith-Jones for the prosecution asking jurors: "Is it a book you would wish your wife or your servant to read?"

In the US, though, the quote about the book that's best remembered comes

from a review in country pursuits magazine *Field & Stream*: "This fictional account of the day-to-day life of an English gamekeeper is still of considerable interest to outdoor minded readers, as it contains many passages on pheasant raising, the apprehending of poachers, ways to control vermin, and other chores and duties of the professional gamekeeper."

"Unfortunately one is obliged to wade through many pages of extraneous material in order to discover and savour these sidelights on the management of a Midlands shooting estate, and in this reviewer's opinion this book can not take the place of JR Miller's Practical Gamekeeping."

Many at the time (and since) considered this a serious review, but it was a joke – its author, Ed Zern, contributed humorous articles to the magazine.

Dogs in space

The first animal to go into orbit was a dog named Laika, shot off by the Russians on 3 November 1957 in Sputnik II. The capsule wasn't designed to return to Earth, and Cosmodog Laika died a few hours after departing from earth.

This was a PR disaster for the Soviets, with protests from animal-lovers all over the world. Significantly, when the Russians launched a two-dog mission in 1960, the animals – Strelka and Belka – accompanied by a rabbit, 40 mice, two rats, and some flies – returned unharmed.

Strelka went on to have a number of puppies, one of which was presented to President Kennedy's daughter Caroline by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

Crane of thought

Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, who was born on 10 November 1566, grew up vain and arrogant, and flattered his way into the affections of the ageing Queen Elizabeth I. Devereux's life went swiftly downhill after his abortive rebellion, and he was executed for treason in 1601. It took three strokes of the executioner's axe to despatch him.

According to legend, the executioner was one Thomas Derrick, who had been spared from a

flogging for rape some years previously by the very same Earl of Essex on condition that he became an executioner.

Derrick had been a sailor and now used his experience with ropes, blocks and pulleys to devise a new type of hoisting beam that he employed to hang an alleged 3,000 miscreants.

The poorest rich woman in the world

Henrietta ('Hetty') Howland Robinson (née Green) was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on 21 November 1838. Reading the financial pages of the papers at the age of six, Hetty would sit on her father's knee and examine stock market reports with him.

Hetty inherited six million dollars, but was eager for more. She contested an aunt's will, which left two million to charity and, when she married millionaire Edward Green, Hetty made him sign away all rights to her fortune. The couple had two children, but grew increasingly estranged because of Hetty's miserliness and eccentricities.

Henrietta ('Hetty') Howland Robinson (née Green), c1907. (Photo by George Grantham Bain/ullstein bild via Getty Images)

In later years Hetty lived alone in a small, two-room apartment in Brooklyn, eating mainly oatmeal (heated on radiators) and broken biscuits. Yet she was one of the most able financiers of the age, investing shrewdly in real estate, mines, railroads, and government bonds. When she died a pauper's death in 1916, she was probably the richest woman in the world.

Crawling for Jesus

"A lot of people tell me I'm crazy," said Baptist minister Hans Mullikin in the 1970s, but as far as he was concerned, crawling 1,600 miles on his hands and knees from Texas to Washington was a religious act. His intention, he said, was to show America "that we need to get on our knees and repent".

Mullikin crawled from his home in Marshall, Texas, to the gates of the White House in Washington DC, in two-and-a-half years. Equipped with footballer's kneepads, he would crawl a certain distance, jog back to his car, drive the car up to the stopping point, then start crawling again, repeating this process over and over. The voyage was not continuous, as he returned home to work in the winter months to finance his journey.

When he arrived at the White House on 22 or 23 November 1978 (some ambiguity surrounds the date), President Carter was unavailable for a meeting.

King Otto I

Albania proclaimed itself independent of the Ottoman Empire on 28 November 1912. What happened in the immediate aftermath is a matter of some dispute. According to one story, the independence leaders chose as their 'protector' Halim Eddine, a Turkish prince. Eddine turned up in Durrës, the then Albanian capital, richly dressed and accompanied by a

strapping bodyguard. He declared an amnesty for all prisoners, a week of celebrations, and appointed all the feudal grandees a place in his cabinet. In turn, he was presented with 25 women for his harem. It was suggested that he be formally crowned king, and so became known as King Otto.

King Otto I of Albania reigned for five days. On day five, the Albanian prime minister received a telegram from Halim Eddine, puzzled to hear reports of his reception, as he hadn't left Turkey yet. The impostor was a German circus performer named Otto Witte (1872–1958), with sword-swallower Max Schlepsig as one of his bodyguards.

Back in Germany the authorities reportedly permitted Witte's identity card to bear the words: 'Former King of Albania'.

A humane invention

Contrary to popular belief, Richard Jordan Gatling (1818–1903) did not 'invent' the machine gun. He merely patented what turned out to be one of the earliest practical ones, on 4 November 1862.

Gatling was a prolific inventor, and his gun – a sequence of rotating barrels operated by a hand-crank – was based on a seed-planting machine he had devised. Gatling later claimed that the gun, far from making the battlefield more murderous, had been invented for humane reasons: "It occurred to me that if I could invent a machine – a gun – which could by its rapidity of fire, enable one man to do as much battle duty as a hundred, that it would, to a large extent, supersede the necessity of large armies." Thus, fewer soldiers would be needed and fewer people would be killed.

Baby saint

The feast of St Rumwold (also sometimes known as Rumwald or Rumbold), one of the most interesting of Britain's Anglo-Saxon saints, is celebrated on 3 November. Rumwold was a grandson of Penda, King of Mercia in the mid-7th century and was born, according to legend, at King's Sutton, Northamptonshire, and died three days later. During his brief life he is supposed to have said "I am a Christian" several times; professed his belief in the Holy Trinity; asked for baptism and Holy Communion; and preached a sermon on the importance of the Trinity and the need for clean living among all good Christians.

The cult of this highly improbable saint was popular in England before the Norman invasion.

Great Catherine's dull death

The death of Empress Catherine the Great of Russia in November 1796 is surrounded in scandalous legend. With the help of her lover, Count Grigory Grigoryevich Orlov, Catherine deposed her husband Peter III in 1762 and took the throne.

Catherine had a succession of lovers after Orlov, each initially 'road-tested' by Catherine's chief lady-in-waiting, the Countess Bruce. Bruce was sacked when it was found she was 'road-testing' young Ivan Rimsky-Korsakov (an ancestor of the composer) far more than was

deemed necessary.

Portrait of the Empress Catherine the Great of Russia, after 1762. (Photo by The Art Collector/Print Collector/Getty Images)

Catherine's love-life became the scandal of Europe, leading to all manner of outrageous stories, the silliest ones being about how she died: she was, the story goes, crushed to death by a horse (in other versions, a bull) that had been suspended over her bed using a harness used for unspeakable purposes. In another version of the story, Catherine was assassinated by spring-loaded blades in her toilet seat.

In reality she had a stroke, lapsed into a coma, and died in a bed of which she was, at the time, the sole occupant.

Pulling the plug

Lake Peigneur in Louisiana was 10ft deep, with a botanical park on one side and some oil wells on the other. On 20 November 1980, contractors working for Texaco were drilling a test hole in the middle of the lake when their rig started to tilt.

The five-man crew fled for the shore as the water in the lake started to turn into a huge whirlpool. A large crater formed at the bottom of the lake as though someone had pulled the plug from an enormous bath, and all the water in Lake Peigneur ran out of the increasingly large hole.

The whirlpool consumed the drilling platform; a tugboat; 11 barges; greenhouses from the nearby botanical gardens; a couple of trucks and trailers; 65 acres of land; and another nearby rig – along with 1.5 billion gallons of lake water.

The drillers, it transpired, had drilled into a salt mine. They knew it was there, but just didn't think it was right under their borehole. Nobody was killed in the incident; the hole was stabilized; and the lake filled once more.

Cheating the bank, and the hangman

Henry Fautleroy was a partner in Marsh, Sibbald & Co, an early 19th-century London bank. His earnings allowed him to indulge his obsession with Napoleon, to the extent he decorated his parlour like the inside of Bonaparte's campaign tent.

The reason Henry could afford this opulence was simple; he was embezzling cash from the bank. His death sentence after being caught was unpopular: Henry was a flamboyant figure who had earned himself a number of fans, many of whom appealed for clemency. One fan even offered to be executed in Fautleroy's place.

Nevertheless, Henry was hanged on 30 November 1824... or was he? Before the introduction of the hangman's drop, which kills by breaking the neck of its victim, hanging was a matter of slow strangulation, and a legend arose that it was possible to cheat the rope by inserting a silver tube into the windpipe.

Fauntleroy was said to have used this method and made a quiet escape after being cut down for dead. There is no evidence that this happened, but many people believed it.

Eugene Byrne is an author and journalist. To find out more, visit eugenebyrne.wordpress.com or follow him on Twitter @EugeneByrne.


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PHOTOGRAPH OF THE LATE PRESIDENT.—We have received a very fine India Ink drawing of "President Lincoln reading the Bible to his son Willie," designed and executed by Mr. A. Berger, of No. 285 Fulton street, in this city. Mr. Berger will conduct the photograph business at the above location hereafter.

 THE Portrait of "Mr. Lincoln at Home," published in our last issue, was copied from the admirable Photograph of Mr. A. BERGER, 285 Fulton Street, Brooklyn.

THE WONDERS OF MODERN SCIENCE.

Some Half Human Monsters Once Thought
to Be of the Devil's Brood.

Marvels Almost Beyond Belief—Their Existence Was Attested by
Evidence Satisfactory to the Committees of the Royal Scientific Society.

One of the weirdest as well as most melancholy stories of human deformity is that of Edward Mordake, said to have been heir to one of the noblest peerages in England. He never claimed the title, however, and committed suicide in his twenty-third year. He lived in complete seclusion, refusing the visits even of the members of his own family. He was a young man of fine attainments, a profound scholar, and a musician of rare ability. His figure was remarkable for its grace, and his face—that is to say, his natural face—was that of an Antinous. But upon the back of his head was another face, that of a beautiful girl, "lovely as a dream, hideous as a devil."

The female face was a mere mask, "occupying only a small portion of the posterior part of the skull, yet exhibiting every sign of intelligence, of a malignant sort, however." It would be seen to smile

and sneer, while Mordake was weeping. The eyes would follow the movements of the spectator, and the lips would "gibber without ceasing." No voice was audible, but Mordake avers that he was kept from his rest at night by the hateful whispers of his "devil twin," as he called it, "which never sleeps, but talks to me forever of such things as they only speak of in hell. No imagination can conceive the dreadful temptations it sets before me. For some unforgiven wickedness of my forefathers I am knit to this fiend—for a fiend it surely is. I beg and beseech you to crush it out of human semblance, even if I die for it." Such were the words of the hapless Mordake to Manvers and Treadwell, his physicians. In spite of careful watching, he managed to procure poison whereof he died, leaving a letter requesting that the "demon face" might be destroyed before his burial, "lest it continues its dreadful whisperings in my grave." At his own request he was interred "in a waste place, without stone or legend to mark his grave."

CHARLES LOTIN HILDRETH

Marvel at the Awesome and Mysterious Power of 19th-Century Magic Advertisements

atlasobscura.com

by Anika Burgess / 19 Aug 2015



An 1894 poster for Harry Kellar's stage show. (Photo: Library of Congress)

Devils. Crystal Balls. Skeletons. Bats. Floating figures. Disembodied heads. The promotional posters for late 19th-century magic shows promised sensational entertainment and awe-inspiring tricks, among them

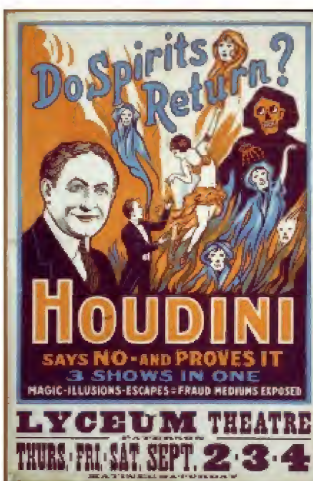
necromancy, mind-reading, fortune-telling, levitation and hypnosis. It's no surprise that attending a magic show at a large theater—as opposed to a country fair, where they had traditionally been held—became a popular pastime for Victorian-era audiences.

As their fame grew, different illusionists became synonymous with certain tricks. Harry Keller was renowned for levitating a woman; Howard Thurston, the "King of Cards," could make cards vanish one-by-one; and the most famous of them all, Harry Houdini, pioneered escape acts and sought to uncover fraudulent spiritualists.

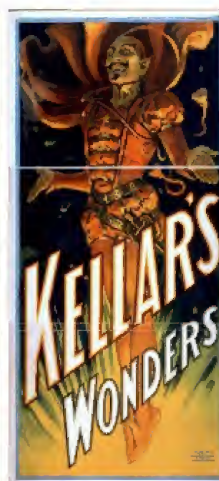
These magicians and their illusions are portrayed in exaggerated glory in the advertisements for the performances, which make up a large part of the Magic Poster Collection from the Library of Congress. Below, we bring you the most tantalizing specimens from the trove.



A 1920 poster for the 'master



Houdini promising to expose



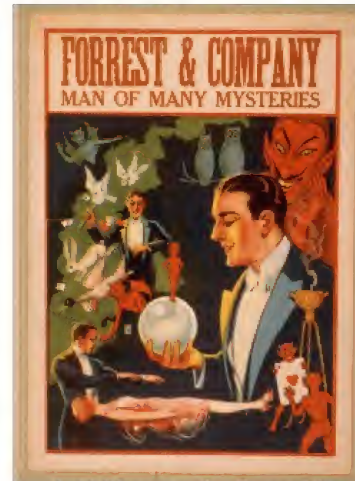
Harry Kellar's demonic 1900 poster.

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mystifier' and necromancer, Harry Houdini. (Photo: Library of Congress)

fraudulent mediums in this 1909 poster. (Photo: Library of Congress)

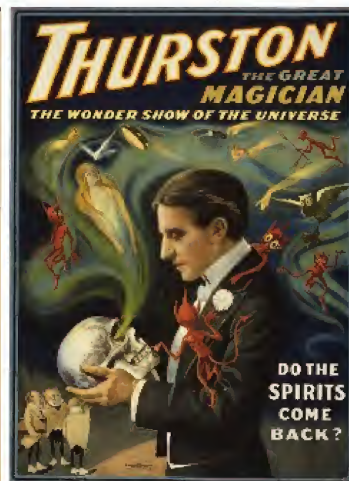
(Photo: Library of Congress)



A 1900 poster for Forrest & Company. (Photo: Library of Congress)



Howard Thurston "all out of a hat", from 1910. (Photo: Library of Congress)



Howard Thurston with the "wonder show of the universe", in 1915. (Photo: Library of Congress)



An 1898 poster for one of Newmann the Great's illusions.



Another Newmann the Great

(Photo: Library of Congress)

poster from 1911. (Photo:
Library of Congress)

A poster from 1870 for the "Modern Witch of Endor". (Photo: Library of Congress)



Leon Herrmann "the Great", from 1898. (Photo: Library of Congress)



Promises of "startling sensations and illusions" in this 1898 poster for Leon and Adelaide Herrmann. (Photo: Library of Congress)



Zan Zig the magician performing in four vignettes in this 1899 poster. (Photo: Library of Congress)



A poster from 1900 for Phillips Climax, successor to The Great Dayton Show. (Photo: Library of Congress)

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of the formation commonly known as the "roof of the mouth," the nose itself doing pitiful service for that structure. There is nothing below the nasal bones until the interior maxillary or lower jaw-bone is reached. The mouth itself is almost square in shape and comes clean to the nose on the upper side. On the right side of the mouth there is a large, dark-red excrescence, resembling a small sponge, which adds greatly to the grotesque appearance of the face. The discharges from the only partially formed nasal duct come direct in to the mouth, and drying there, protrudes from the misshapen lips in something greatly representing a dog's tail. The hands are also bent downward, paw-like, at the wrist, adding to the resemblance mentioned in the first rumor.

The unhappy young mother states that last summer, while attending a side-show performance at the Fair grounds, in company with Butler, she received a severe shock from fright from something that she saw. It is a well known fact

IN OBSTETRICAL SCIENCE

that in cases of pregnancy a severe fright will often impart to the babe a resemblance to the object which caused the shock. The present instance is a case in point.

The child takes nourishment from a spoon in great quantities, and is likely to live.

The important point in this statement is the refusal of Thorn to say anything about his whereabouts on Friday, June 25, from 10 o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock that night. It was some time between those hours that the murder was committed.

The work of dragging the bottom of East River for Guldensuppe's head was begun by the police this morning, when Captain Schultz detailed for the undertaking four launches. The police have no definite idea where the head, in its plaster of paris covering, was dropped into the water, but on the chance that they might pick it up with grappling hooks, four expert grapplers were hired, one for each launch. The work was watched with curiosity by the crowds that gathered on the piers and by the passengers on the ferry and excursion boats. The net result of the search was an old coat, discarded by a tugboat engineer, and a lot of scrap iron and rope ends.

The Herald to-morrow will say that Martin Thorn has confessed to the police that he killed Guldensuppe. He made a complete acknowledgment of his connection with the crime. The Herald says Thorn admitted everything except that Mrs. Nack had anything to do directly with the killing. The story differs but little from that told by Barber Gartha, to whom Thorn told the details some days ago. Thorn's one concern after his arrest was the protection of Mrs. Nack. He made no secret of his warm regard for the woman and insisted that she had nothing to do with Guldensuppe's death.

"I am perfectly willing to die," Thorn told the detectives; "but I don't want anything to happen to her."

3,000 jars of ancient Roman fish sauce discovered in shipwreck off Italian coast

ibtimes.co.uk

• By Hannah Osborne
December 11, 2015 16:33 GMT



Garum - or fish sauce - was a staple food across the Roman Empire (representational image) Rafael dP. Iberia-Hispania/Flickr

An ancient Roman shipwreck containing 3,000 jars of fish sauce has been discovered off the coast of Italy. Archaeologists have spent the last two years searching for the wreck off the coast of Alassio, in the Liguria region.

The fish sauce, or garum, was being transported along a sailing route between Italy, Spain and Portugal. The sauce was made from fermenting salted fish intestines and was a staple food across the Roman Empire.

Researchers became aware of a shipwreck in the region in 2012 when fisherman came across clay jars that had been on board the boat when it sank around 2,000 years ago, The Local reports.

Garum was a mainstay of banqueting tables and street food stands across the Roman empire. "It's an exceptional find that dates to the first or second century AD," team

leader Simonluca Trigona told the website.

"It's one of just five 'deep sea' Roman vessels ever to be found in the Mediterranean and the first one to be found off the coast of Liguria. We know it was carrying a large cargo of garum when it sank."

The 25m wreck was sitting around 200m beneath the surface of the water and researchers spent the two years searching the seabed before finally discovering it in October. While the fish sauce itself was long gone, the clay jars it had been stored in remained.

Trigona continued: "After we filmed the wreck and analysed an amphora [clay jar] and some fragments that a robotic craft brought back to the surface, we realized the ship was carrying a huge quantity of fish sauce when it sank. The amphora are almost all of a certain type, which was used exclusively for garum."

As well as the fish sauce, they also found jars used to transport wine to the Iberian peninsula. This provided the team with a good idea of where the ill-fated ship was headed. "It's a nice find because it means we are almost sure about the route this ship was on," Trugona said. "She most likely sailed out of Rome along the Tiber and sank a couple of weeks later while making the return journey, weighed down by all that fish sauce."

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ANOTHER MUSEUM ATTRACTION.

A Woman Orders a Bible Agent from her Door.—The Birth of a Monstrosity Follows.

A report from Chatham, Minn., states that Mrs. Sarah A. Morris, a respectable lady of Boone Bridge, Waugh county, has given birth to the most remarkable monstrosity ever heard of in this part of Minnesota. The people who have visited the house call it the devil. The mother, when she saw it, went into hysterics, and has been sent to the asylum at St. Peter in a hopeless state of lunacy.

The devil was born four weeks ago, and has developed so rapidly that it weighs twenty-two pounds. Its display of intelligence is something wonderful, and exceeds that of ordinary children from 12 to 18 months old. Its body is covered thickly with Auburn hair about two inches long. It has two horns, a tail like that of a cat, and feet which are partly like those of a man and partly like those of a dog.

The birth of the phenomenon is due, according to members of the Morris family, to a trivial occurrence. Some time in November, when a book agent appeared at the house selling Catholic Bibles, Mrs. Morris formed a violent dislike to the man, and ordered him out of the house, telling him she would as soon have the devil in the house as a Bible. The agent accused her of blasphemy and said dramatically as she hustled him out at the door: "I will send you the devil to plague you."

Guldensuppe had recently been living with Mrs. Augustine Nack, who left her husband for Guldensuppe. Mrs. Nack had quarreled with Guldensuppe last Thursday on account of his supposed unfaithfulness to her. She is held a prisoner at police headquarters and will be charged with murder. A storekeeper at Astoria, L. I., has identified her as the woman to whom he sold oil cloth in which the fragments of the body were wrapped.

Detectives searched the rooms of Mrs. Nack and found hidden there pieces of this red and yellow oil cloth.

Mrs. Nack when arrested

William Guldensuppe Was the Un- fortunate Victim.

**His Legs Found Off the Brooklyn Navy
Yard.**

**Mrs. Augustine Nack, With Whom
He Had Lived, Under Arrest for
the Murder—It Is Thought An-
other of Her Lovers, Who Has
Disappeared, Was a Party to the
Crime.**

NEW YORK, June 30.—The headless body in the Morgue has been identified by ten men as that of William Guldensuppe, a rubber in a Turkish bath establishment in this city. The head is lacking to complete the body. The first fragment of the body, from the neck to the waist, was found in East River on Saturday. The second fragment, the lower portion of the trunk, was found in the Ogden woods, north of Harlem River, on Sunday. The legs were found in the river off the Brooklyn Navy Yard this afternoon.

Guldensuppe had recently been identified

Max Riger and wife, who keep a small store on Long Island, identified Mrs. Nack as one of the two women who last Wednesday had bought four and a half yards of red oil cloth, such as the body was wrapped in.

While this was happening at police headquarters two reporters of the "Journal and Advertiser," which paper had given the clues leading to Mrs. Nack's arrest, traced Mrs. Nack's husband and arrested him while he was driving his bakery wagon. Nack resisted arrest furiously and was taken to the station-house half demented with rage and fear. It proved that he had that he had made all his arrangements to leave town.

Two boys while swimming in the Wallabout Basin, near the Brooklyn Navy Yard, found two male legs wrapped in a canvas. It is believed that the legs are those of Guldensuppe.

The positive and indubitable identification is made by the Superintendent of the baths and five attendants, who had seen the man naked day after day for years and knew every mark on him. He was further identified by Dr. J. S. Cosby of 215 Forty-fourth street. Dr. Cosby had lanced and treated a felon on the index finger of Guldensuppe's left hand. At the Morgue Dr. Cosby instantly identified the cicatrice of the wound his lancet had made.

Guldensuppe had been a sailor. On his breast was tattooed in India ink the figure of a woman. It covered a space as large as a man's hand. The butcher who cut him up cut this out. Guldensuppe left the baths last Friday morning. He disappeared. In all the four years of his employment there he had never missed a day's work. No word has been received from him.

Guldensuppe lived with Mrs. Augusta Nack, a midwife, at 339 Fifth avenue, near Thirty-fourth street. She is separated from her husband. Nack threatened Guldensuppe.

A man who lived with the Nacks before Guldensuppe came, and who is Nack's friend, had openly threatened Guldensuppe. The big masseur had supplanted him and thrashed him after taking away his pistol.

Mrs. Nack says she does not know and does not care where Guldensuppe is; that she has not since him since Friday morning, the day before the body was found in East River. The night before she had seen him take another woman's card. Then this man and Mrs. Nack quarreled. He made her give him \$5 and went away. At 1 o'clock on Tuesday morning a reporter went to Mrs. Nack's house. The rooms were in perfect order, as if she intended to live there the rest of her life. Seven hours later the woman had seen the landlord and given up the flat. She had employed four men, who were at work dismantling the rooms. She said her mother was ill and she was going to Europe.

Mrs. Nack vehemently told and repeated to detectives who visited her at 2 o'clock this morning that Guldensuppe was at Mrs. Cunningham's house, at 21 Bedford street. She declared, too, that Mrs. Cunningham had been to her flat for his clothes. But Guldensuppe was not at Mrs. Cunningham's house. Mrs. Cunningham had not gone or sent for his clothes.

Beside Mrs. Nack, when she visited the bathhouse, told the Superintendent Guldensuppe would send for his trunk to-morrow.

A little questioning brought forth the fact that she (Mrs. Nack) and Guldensuppe had quarreled and separated. She is said to have remarked angrily:

"Oh, I suppose he wants to go with that other woman of his."

Mrs. Nack when arrested was preparing to leave for Europe.

The man Nack, husband of the woman, was arrested to-day, but subsequently released, as he proved a complete alibi. Nack said that his wife was capable of committing the murder, and he suggested that another lover of Mrs. Nack was implicated.

Mrs. Nack is a Bostonian, 28 years old.

mi, Ego vero ex Lege illius
Majestatis Thesaurum in Ci-
tatione promissa postulatum
abs te accipio et aufero; Abi
nunc Placatilissime in locum tu-
um sine rûmore, Tumultu et
sine lésione nostruum et cir-
culi aliorumq; hominum, in
nomine Patris + et Fi-
lii + & Spiritus Sancti +
A M E N.

†
J H S

LOOKS LIKE A DOG.

A Startling Human Monstrosity with the Features of an Animal, Born in the East End.

Mary Dillon's Sad Case—Her Fright at the Fair Grounds and Its Result—The Child Likely to Live.

Last evening a **REPUBLICAN** reporter quietly received the startling information that a baby had been born in the east end of the city, that was a human monstrosity of a surprising type—that, in other words, the lower part of its face looked like that

OF A WILD ANIMAL,

and especially a dog. The case was investigated this morning, and while it does not fully come up to the startling mark set by the first statement, it is one of extreme interest to medical science, and will be learned with much interest by the gentlemen of that profession in this city.

This (Tuesday) morning, two young medical students visited the residence of Mr. and Mrs. James Dillon, No. 227 east North street, where they saw the child. It was born a week ago tomorrow to Mary Ellen Dillon, the elder daughter of the family, and is in many particulars a handsome child. It is a boy, and its physical development is simply remarkable. Its body is as large and full as many a child's at a month old. Its little limbs are fat and plump, its head large and of good shape, and it is an eminently good-natured and well-behaved child. The young girl's parents are plunged in grief at their daughter's shame, but are treating her with the utmost kindness and forbearance. They are honest, intelligent and kind hearted Irish people of the better class. Four months ago, Mary Ellen brought suit against a young man named Will Butler.

A FLUNKER, FOR BASTARDY.

He skipped out and is now in Detroit, it is said. The constables have been hunting for him ever since and an unsuccessful search of theirs was recently published in the **REPUBLICAN**. His mother was a former fish-monger in market, but is now living off the proceeds of a pension, which, it is said, is so arranged that the marriage of her son, Will, will nullify it. Be that as it may, Butler, to whom Miss Dillon was, and is yet, devotedly attached, has not been seen since the commencement of the suit, and the girl is now left to bear the shame of wronged womanhood and the parentage of a monstrosity.

The baby is pitifully deformed and it is easy to see how the report of the

RESEMBLANCE TO AN ANIMAL could have originated. The superior maxillary—the upper jaw bone—is missing on the left side and there is no trace at all of the formation commonly known as the

6-year-old girl kidnapped by traffickers before being cut up to sell her organs



Blanca Digna Lopez

By: Wayne Morin

Police are looking to arrest a gang of kidnapers after one suspect admitted to police that they kidnapped a young girl and cut up her body in order to sell her organs, police in Colombia said.

Buesaco police said that the suspect recently confessed to the crime, saying that the girl had been sold so that her organs can be harvested.

According to the police investigation, 6-year-old Paula Nicole Palacios Narvaez was kidnapped as she left school one day last year.

So far, police have managed to capture five people involved in the kidnapping.

One suspect, 52-year-old Jose German Paguati Insandara, told investigators that Blanca Digna Lopez, the female leader of the gang, planned the kidnapping.

Erwin David Quintero Martinez was also arrested in connection with the kidnapping. Insandara told investigators that Lopez was into child trafficking.

Lopez allegedly offered him \$18,000 for each child he manages to kidnap. Insandara also described the details of the kidnapping.

Lopez stood outside the school and motioned to Insandara when she saw the girl. Insandara and several women grabbed the girl and put her in a car.

They then drove the girl to a secret location and handed her over to traffickers. Lopez told investigators that since the girl's family owed her money, she decided to kidnap her and sell her for cash.

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600 Bobbleheads Mysteriously Left Near Doorstep

By Steven Luke

Published at 4:41 PM PST on Nov 12, 2015

nbcсандiego.com

Several roommates were miffed when 600 bobbleheads bearing the face of a former Padres player mysteriously turned up near their doorstep in University City, San Diego.

Now they're resorting to handing them out as party favors.

The woman who answered the phone at the San Diego Police Department told Philip Jia it was the strangest call she'd ever received.

Jia and a handful of his young 20-something roommates in University City asked if an officer could come out and take a look at the items someone dumped in the middle of their condo complex street.

Hundreds of Padres bobbleheads littered the pavement and they all had the same face.

"I'm now a huge Chris Denorfia fan," said Philip Jia, who along with his roommates had never heard of the former Padres player now sitting in more boxes than they could carry.

And so began the great bobblehead mystery of 2015.

"We opened them up expecting to find something a little more nefarious," Jia said, referring to when they first opened the bobblehead boxes.

"We thought it was from a drug cartel or something," echoed roommate Jalena Lau. "But when we went through them, they were just regular bobbleheads."

The police department sent an officer who took a report, but advised the group to simply help out their HOA and clean the mess up.

They loaded about half the Denorfia bobbleheads into their apartment, decorating the bedroom of a roommate who wasn't home and went to bed.

They left the rest in the street and by morning they were gone, presumably taken by neighbors.

The roommates gave them away to co-workers, friends, and family members, but the bobbling Denorfias still hold a hefty presence inside their home.

A huge stack lines the front entry and another pile sits under the inside basketball hoop.

"Actually, we had a huge Halloween party and a lot of our friends came over and it was kind of a like a present we gave out to everyone," said Lau.

The roommates never heard back from police, so if the Denorfias were stolen or some kind of contraband, it wasn't reported.

The real Chris Denorfia was traded from the Padres back in July of 2014 and now plays for the Cubs.

The roommates, who've considered flooding the Ebay market where some of the same figurines are listed for \$20, say the Denorfia Bobblehead demand apparently just isn't what it used to be.

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66 snakes confiscated from Baltimore apartment

wbaltv.com

- UPDATED 5:31 PM EST Dec 10, 2015

Hide Transcript

PRINGLE EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENS N. >> MANY PEOPLE ARE TERRIFIED OF SNAKES LIKE THIS BUT CITY ANIMAL THESE SNAKES WERE WERE RESCUED. ASK MOST OF THE CAGES WERE THEIR SAFETY. IN SUCH BAD SHAPE WE CANNOT SHOW THEM TO YOU. >> SOME HAD DECAYING RODENTS INSIDE. >> IF THERE ARE ANIMALS IN NEED WE WILL TAKE THEM IN AND DO LIFE. THAT DOES DEPEND A L ON RESOURCES. SHE HAS CARED FOR SNAKES BEFORE BUT NEVER THIS MANY. THEY A ABLE TO TREAT THE SICK ONES AND KEEP THE HEALTHIER ONES IN A WARM ENVIRONMENT. >> WE HAVE ALL SIZES. THERE IS THE ONE THAT IS REALLY SMALL AND THIS GUY A ONE THAT IS ABOUT 10 FEET. SNAKE YOU NEED A PERMIT AND IT HAS TO BE UNDER FIVE FEET LONG. >> BAR DOES HAVE THE FOR THE SNAKES BUT THEY HAVE NEVER HAD THIS MANY SO THEY ARE

BALTIMORE —A tip reporting a bad smell led authorities to confiscate dozens of sick snakes from a Baltimore apartment.

City Animal Control officials said they recovered 66 snakes, most of which are in severely bad shape, from a house on Callow Street. Authorities said many of the snakes are sick and three had to be euthanized.

"Most of the cages were unsanitary. We removed them for their safety," said Bob Lukiewski, an animal enforcement officer. "They had mites and things like that. Some of them had decaying rodents inside."

Animal Control took the snakes to the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, which is primarily a shelter for dogs and cats.

"We don't turn you away. If there are animals in need, we're going to take them in and we're going to do everything to save their life, and that does depend on resources," said Jennifer Brause, with BARCS.

BARCS has cared for snakes before, but never this many. They are able to treat the sick ones and keep the healthier ones in a warm, safe environment.

"We have them in all sizes. There was one I was holding that was really small ... and we have one that's about 10 feet (long)," said Lisa Morabito, with BARCS.

A permit is required to own any type of snake in Baltimore City, and the snake has to be under 5 feet long.



Bad smell leads to discovery of dozens of snakes

BARCS will find a permanent home for all the snakes after nursing them back to health.

BARCS has the vets on staff to care for the snakes, but they've never taken in this many, so they are asking for help. **Tap here to see their Amazon wish list for supplies.**



confiscated snake

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• Comments (0)

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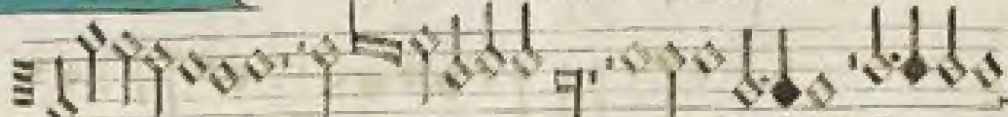
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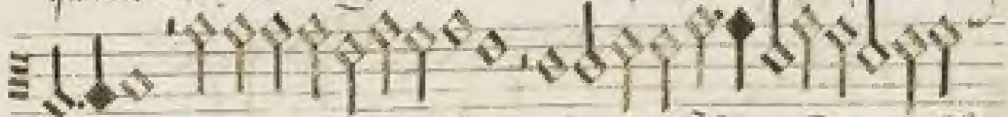


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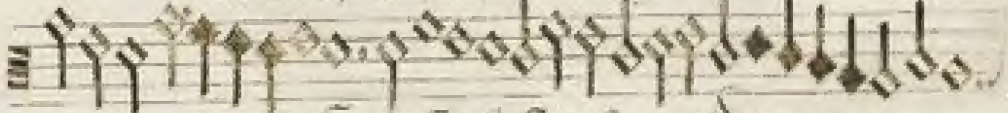


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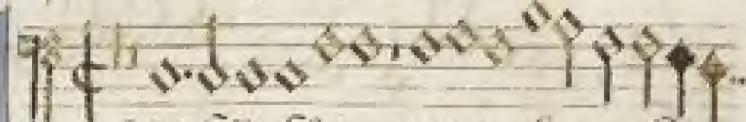
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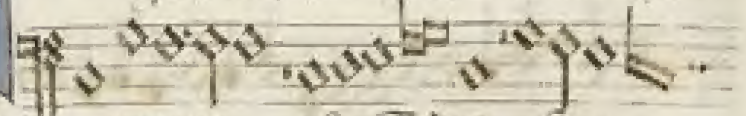
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Prologue

Of ech of hem so as it semed me
 And whiche they were and of what degre
 And in what aray eke they weren ynn
 And at a knyght thenne I byl begonne



A knyght ther was a worthy man
 That fro the tyme that he first began
 To ryden out / he loved chivalrye
 Trouth & honour freedom and curtesye
 Ful worthy he was in his lordis werre
 And thereto hadde he ryden noman ferre
 And as wel in crystendom as in sethenesse
 And euer hadde honour for his worthynesse
 At alsaundre he was whan it was thonne
 Ful ofte tyme he hadde the sword begonne
 Aboven alle naciouns in prynces
 In letwylle hadde he tryed and in Ruse



8 things you (probably) didn't know about King Arthur

Friday 4th December 2015

historyextra.com

The legend of King Arthur, a fifth-century warrior who supposedly led the fight against Saxon invaders, continues to fascinate today. Here, as part of our Myths and Legends Week, historian John Matthews reveals eight things you probably didn't know about King Arthur...



Illustration of King Arthur's coronation from the 13th-century *Flores Historiarum*. From *The Island Race*, a 20th-century book covering the history of the British Isles from the pre-Roman times to the Victorian era. Written by Sir Winston Churchill and abridged by Timothy Baker. (Photo by Universal History Archive/UIG via Getty Images)

1) The once and future king

Arthur, sometimes known as 'the king that was and the king that shall be', is recognised all over the world as one of the most famous characters of myth and legend. Yet, if he existed at all (which few scholars agree upon), he would not have been a king, but the commander of an elite force of fighting men. Furthermore, he would have lived more than 500 years before medieval legends suggest.

All that is known, with even the least degree of certainty, is that a man named Arthur, or Arturus, led a band of

heroic warriors who spearheaded the resistance of Britons against the invading Saxons, Jutes, and others from the north of Europe, sometime in the fifth and sixth centuries AD.

Another theory claims that Arthur was a Roman centurion named Lucius Artorius Castus, who fought against the Picts [northern tribes that constituted the largest kingdom in Dark Age Scotland] on Hadrian's Wall in the second century AD, some 300 years earlier than the time at which Arthur's dates are normally set.

Even Arthur's birthplace and base of operations are questionable. Camelot – the castled city associated with King Arthur – was invented by the 12th-century French poet Chrétien de Troyes. Arthur's association with Cornwall and parts of Wales is an idea fostered by 18th-century antiquarians such as William Stukeley, who carried out one of the first archaeological investigations at Cadbury Castle in Somerset, long believed in local folklore to be the original site of Camelot.

Whatever the truth – and we may never know for sure – the adventures of the legendary King Arthur, with his Round Table Fellowship of Knights based in the mythical city of Camelot, were told and retold between the 11th and 15th centuries in hundreds of manuscripts in at least a dozen languages. "What place is there within the bounds of the Empire of Christendom to which the winged praise of Arthur the Briton has not extended?" wrote the 12th-century chronicler Alanus ab Insulis (or Alain de Lille). Today Arthurian stories are told in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Icelandic, Dutch, Russian, and even Hebrew.

2) The Round Table

The Round Table is the centerpiece of the Arthurian world. According to the 13th-century poet Layamon, Arthur ordered the table to be built for him by a famous Cornish carpenter, who somehow made the table capable of seating 1,600 men (clearly an exaggeration), yet easily portable to wherever Arthur set up his mobile base of operations.

Other stories suggest it was Merlin, the king's magician, who made the table – “round” he said, “in the likeness of the world” – and who sent out a call to the bravest and truest knights to join a great fellowship whose task was to care for the disenfranchised (especially women), and who would do no harm to anyone who did not deserve it.

Some 150 knights were said to have sat at the Round Table. Their adventures lead us into a magical realm of wonder: where ‘faery women’ test the nobility of the knights by offering them seemingly impossible tasks, and strange creatures lurk in the shadows of a vast forest, in whose depth are clearings where castles, chapels, hermitages, and ruins are found – some empty, others containing dangerous foes.

When they had largely rid the land of monsters, dragons, and evil customs, the knights undertook their greatest task of all – the quest for the Holy Grail. Many did not return.



King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, after a 14th-century miniature. From Les Artes Au Moyen Age, Published Paris (1873). (Photo by: Universal History Archive/UiG via Getty Images)

3) Merlin

Merlin, Arthur's advisor, appears in different legends as a magician, a prophet, a wildman, or a visionary poet. He is said to have helped bring about the birth of the future king by magically giving Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon, the likeness of his rival, Gorlois of Tintagel, Duke of Cornwall, so that Uther could engender a child

with Gorlois' wife, Igraine. Once Arthur was born, Merlin is said to have carried him away to a secret location in the forest, and watched over him until he came of age.

At this point, Merlin supposedly arranged the test of the Sword in the Stone, which only the true king could draw. This sword is often confused with Arthur's most famous weapon, Excalibur, the legendary sword said to have magical powers. In fact that blade was given to Arthur later by the Lady of the Lake (a ‘faery woman’ who appears in the stories), after the sword from the stone breaks during battle.

It is another such faery being, Nimue, the handmaid of the Lady of the Lake, who becomes Merlin's nemesis: Merlin falls passionately in love with the beautiful damsel, who tricks him into giving her the secrets of his magic and then uses them against him, locking him forever in a cave from which, years after, ‘the cry of Merlin’ could still be heard.

Merlin's own origins are almost as difficult to establish as Arthur's. A collection of poems, magical and mystical in nature, is attributed to a princely bard named Myrddin, whose British name was changed because of its unfortunate similarity to *merde* (excrement) in French. The 12th-century writer Geoffrey of Monmouth, who included Arthur in his *History of the Kings of Britain* (1138), also wrote a *Life of Merlin* (c1150), in which a sixth-century prince goes mad after seeing his nephews killed in battle and who hides in the forest, telling stories to a pet pig. Geoffrey clearly considered this was the same Merlin as the character included in his later *History of the Kings of Britain*.

4) Faery women

Many faery women thread together the stories of Arthur and his knights. This is probably because a good number of the stories originated not in Britain, but in Brittany – or, as it was known then, Armorica or Aermorica, where belief in ancient deities and the faery race lived on. These faery tales became interwoven with stories of chivalry beloved by the courtly circle. Within the courtly circle these stories were told by roving troubadours – poets who learned dozens of Arthurian tales by heart.

In c1150 Geoffrey of Monmouth named nine sisters in his *Vita Merlini* as the rulers of the enchanted island of Avalon. Among them was Morgen (more familiar to us as Morgan le Fay), who in later stories is described as Arthur's half-sister and becomes his most implacable foe. Sir Thomas Malory, in his great 15th-century novel, *Le Mort D'Arthur*, tells us Morgan was "put to school on a nunnery, where she learned magic and necromancy".

Though this may sound odd to us today, many of the women in enclosed orders were learned, and since learning was frequently equated with magic, thus Morgan came to be considered a sorceress.

Geoffrey of Monmouth. Found in the collection of Mary's Priory Church, Monmouth. (Photo by Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images)

5) The grail

The greatest task undertaken by Arthur's knights was the quest for the grail, a mysterious vessel linked to the Passion of Christ [the story of Jesus Christ's arrest, trial, suffering, and eventual execution by crucifixion]. According to the 12th-century poet Robert De Boron, the grail was used to celebrate the Last Supper, and afterwards by Christ's 'uncle', Joseph of Arimathea, to catch some of the blood that flowed from the Saviour as his body was taken down from the cross.

Earlier stories, from the mythology of the Celts, can be seen as precursors of the grail: they spoke of "cauldrons of plenty" that provided food for heroes and could even bring the dead to life. But once the links with Christian belief were established in the 12th century, the grail became a holy relic sought by mystics and heroes – and, most famously, by Arthur's fellowship.

All 150 knights of the Round Table are said to have gone forth in search of the sacred vessel

after it appeared at Camelot during Pentecost [a feast celebrated each year on the 50th day after the Great and Holy Feast of Pascha (Easter) and 10 days after the Feast of the Ascension of Christ]. Of those who went forth only three succeeded in their quest to find the grail: the saintly knight Sir Galahad, the simple Sir Percival, and the honest, plain-spoken Sir Bors.

Many other knights perished, and this undoubtedly weakened both the Round Table and Arthur's court, preparing the way for the dark days to come when Arthur's illegitimate son Mordred rose up against him and ended the dream of Camelot.

6) Lancelot and Guinevere

Love stories feature a great deal in the Arthurian world. Tristan and Isolde, for example, best known these days from Wagner's 1859 opera that retold their story, were famous doomed lovers. But another story, originating in France, became one of the best known of the Arthurian tales: the love story of Lancelot and Guinevere.

The 12th-century poet Chrétien de Troyes gave us an account of their romance in his *Lancelot, or the Knight of the Cart* (c1177). No stories before this feature Lancelot, so we must assume that Chrétien invented him. Lancelot became known as the greatest knight of the Round Table and Arthur's most trusted ally, but it was his illicit love for Queen Guinevere that made him famous.

Chrétien's story tells a dramatic tale of Guinevere's abduction by a lord named Melwas, who had fallen in love with the queen, and of Lancelot's efforts to rescue her. In order to reach Melwas' castle, where she is held, Lancelot is forced to ride in a cart – a vehicle reserved for criminals on their way to the gallows. But Lancelot hesitates for a moment, and when Guinevere learns of this later on she spurns him as not worthy of her affections.

Later stories extended Lancelot and Guinevere's love into a full-blown affair, which in the end brought down the Round Table and ushered in the end of Arthur's reign when Lancelot rescued the queen, who had been condemned to burn at the stake, and in the process killed several of Arthur's knights. With the king reluctantly forced to attack Lancelot, the way was left open for Mordred to attack Camelot.

Scene from 'Mort d'Arthur', 14th century. Sir Lancelot of the Lake and Queen Guinevere seen embracing by King Arthur. (Photo by Ann Ronan Pictures/Print Collector/Getty Images)

Scene from 'Mort d'Arthur', 14th century. Sir Lancelot of the Lake and Queen Guinevere seen embracing by King Arthur. (Photo by Ann Ronan Pictures/Print Collector/Getty Images)

7) The death of Arthur

Weakened by the losses incurred during the quest for the grail, and then by the scandal of Lancelot and Guinevere, Arthur's kingdom began to break apart.

War broke out after Lancelot staged an armed rescue of Guinevere, condemned to death for

her treasonous love for the great knight. In the heat of battle Lancelot killed two of Arthur's best men, Gareth and Gaheris, who had defended the queen. Their brother, the famous knight Sir Gawain, thus became Lancelot's most bitter foe, and as Arthur was forced to respond to Lancelot's rescue of the queen, he reluctantly led an army to France to attack him.

While Arthur and Gawain were away attacking Lancelot, King Arthur's son, Mordred, raised an army and declared himself king. With the hasty return of the true king to Britain, a final battle took place at Camlann. Arthur killed Mordred, but suffered a wound that seemed likely to kill him – though in the end he was taken to Avalon to be healed.

There follows one of the most famous scenes in the entire series of Arthurian stories: Arthur's faithful follower, Sir Bedivere, throws the king's mighty sword back into the lake from which it had come at the beginning of his reign (given him by the Lady of the Lake). A mysterious hand rises from the water and seizes the sword, drawing it under.

A ship then appears, carrying three queens, who take the wounded Arthur away, across the sea to the fabled Isle of Avalon, where it is said he would be healed of his wounds and live on, awaiting recall by his country in time of need – the 'once and future king' indeed.

8) Arthur's bones

Belief in Arthur's expected return to his country was kept alive in stories for many years by the people of Britain. Arthur's bones were supposedly found at Glastonbury Abbey in 1191, though this was nothing more than a fabrication designed to quell the belief that Arthur would return to expel the invading Normans. Nevertheless, some bones were indeed interred in a black marble tomb in 1278 at the expense of Edward I.

To this day, countless new books, films, television shows and plays continue to be created about King Arthur, adding to the popularity of the legends, which remain among the most familiar and best-loved stories of all time.

John Matthews is a historian who has produced more than 100 books on myth, the Arthurian legends, and the history of the Grail. His latest book, *King Arthur: Many Faces, One Hero*, co-written with Caitlín Matthews, will be published by Inner Traditions in 2016.

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Wearing newspapers for warmth, c19th century. (Courtesy of Caroline Rochford)

In her new book, *Great Victorian Discoveries: Astounding Revelations and Misguided Assumptions*, Caroline Rochford examines some of the incredible findings made across the world between 1875 and 1895. Here, writing for *History Extra*, she shares some of her highlights...

The Victorians lived in an age when knowledge could be shared faster than ever before. New railways and steamships had made it easier for intrepid explorers to visit regions of the

world hitherto unseen by western eyes; telephones enabled communication across vast distances, and speedier printing presses ensured the delivery of the latest news to almost every household in the land. Meanwhile, those with a thirst for knowledge were able to read about the astounding discoveries of natural historians, who published thrilling accounts of the strange new plants and creatures they'd encountered during their forages.

Indeed, modern technology had kick-started an information revolution in every field of science. With the aid of photography, microscopes and other new contraptions, researchers were happening upon daily discoveries that promised to change the way the world worked. These many remarkable discoveries were described in the pages of forgotten Victorian compendia, which revealed the wondrous experiments and bizarre theories of the great – and not-so-great – minds of science, engineering and natural history.

1) The four-legged bird

Since the publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, mankind has been captivated by the theory of evolution. In 1885 an American naturalist, Edward Morris Brigham, took great pleasure in announcing the discovery – made in 1881 – of an astonishing type of bird that lived by the banks of the Amazon River: the creature's most incredible characteristic was that it was born with four feet.

The discovery was so contrary to the accepted order of things that it baffled scientists of the age. Even more curious was that this South American creature was four-footed only in its early life – one pair of legs developed into a set of wings some time after hatching. This was a trait akin to the regenerative power of lizards, which have the ability to regrow lost limbs, thus Brigham's discovery seemed to confirm the evolutionary theory that birds are descended from

dinosaurs.

Brigham was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of the elusive creature, and he compared its likeness to a pheasant. The bird, commonly known as the 'cigana' or 'gypsy bird', couldn't sing; instead it uttered doleful and demonic cries, as if in mourning. This was an eerie sound in the dead of night, when the bird was active.

2) The electricity plant

In 1885 an unusual, tropical plant termed the *phytolacca electrica* was discovered on the torrid plain of Hindustan [the northern/northwestern subcontinent]. When in full bloom, this extraordinary species generated a strong current of electricity that flowed all the way through it, from root to tip.

The indigenous people who lived in the region regarded it with awe and reverence, never daring to get too close. Birds and insects that came into contact with the tree were killed at once, but most had learned to keep well away.

When the stem of the plant or a twig was snapped by hand, an intense electric shock was felt, reportedly causing even the strongest man to stagger backwards. Magnetic compasses – even at a distance of up to 20 feet – were reportedly affected by the plant's power.

Curiously, the electric current was said to vary throughout the day, being at its strongest at about 2pm and most feeble during the night. In the rainy season the plant became completely dormant, yet its energy increased by a marked degree during thunderstorms.

The phytolacca electrica, c19th century. (Courtesy of Caroline Rochford)

3) Local anaesthetic

Victorian surgeons had long sought an anaesthetic which, when applied externally to a given part of the body, would render it completely void of feeling for a certain length of time, without the need to send the patient to sleep. This numbing property was discovered in 1884, completely by chance, by a German medical student, whose research quickly spread to America.

The substance in question was hydrochlorate of cocaine, which had been known about, but not widely used, since the mid-19th century. After accidentally splashing some of it in his eye, the student was surprised to find that it caused his eyeball to become insensitive to the touch. Further trials served to confirm this remarkable observation, and an eminent oculist in New York later performed cataract surgery on the eye of a patient without causing her any pain whatsoever.

Had it not been for this total fluke – and the absence of safety goggles – this early local

anaesthetic may never have been discovered.

4) The land of the giants

Mankind's oldest legends are peppered with tales of giants who once roamed the landscape, causing unspeakable mayhem for the regular-sized inhabitants of the earth. From David and Goliath to *Jack and the Beanstalk*, so frequent were the references to oversized beings that the Victorians seriously wondered whether or not a race of exceedingly tall men once existed on earth but later became extinct.

One of the investigators was Count Georges Vacher de Lapouge, a French anthropologist who made a remarkable discovery in a prehistoric burial ground at Castelnau-le-Lez, near Montpellier. In 1890 he uncovered portions of a human skeleton from the Neolithic period, which, by his calculations, came from a man who stood nearly 12ft tall. The remains were sent for examination by a team of professors at the University of Montpellier, and later by the Montpellier School of Medicine, who confirmed that the bones appeared to belong to a race of "very tall" men.

Strangely enough, an old French fable placed the cavern of a giant in the same valley of Castelnau.

5) Mankind's lost magnetic sense

In 1883, the great scientist Lord Kelvin proposed a theory that the human race possessed both a 'sixth sense' – heat and force combined – and a 'seventh sense': that of magnetism. As such, the phenomenon of clairvoyance could be explained by the fact that some people were in tune with their magnetic sense much better than others.

Unaware of what they were picking up on, they interpreted the sensation as the presence of some invisible being, perhaps even a spirit from beyond the grave. Following a series of experiments, several people were found who, when their heads were placed between the poles of a strong electromagnet, could tell when it was turned on.

Kelvin's theory was largely forgotten about until the 1970s, when a team of scientists revisited the subject. Through their researches they discovered that the human nose consists of bones and sinews that may once have been receptive to the earth's magnetic field, thereby acting as a kind of in-built compass, which, during the course of evolution, became functionless.

The presence of such magnetic bones offers an explanation for how migratory animals manage to successfully navigate vast distances, and also points to the likely etymology of the old expression 'follow your nose'.

6) Ball lightning

Nobody truly knows how or why the extraordinary phenomenon known as ball lightning is caused, but during the 19th century, hundreds of well-attested instances were chronicled.

Owing to its rarity, no photographs of the lightning had ever been taken – until, that is, 17 July 1891, at about 10.15pm. If genuine, this is the first ever photograph of ball lightning, and for more than a century it remained the only known example in existence, until Chinese scientists succeeded in capturing the phenomenon on film during a lightning storm in 2012.

The photograph of 1891 was taken by Mr Dunn, an ironmonger's son, from the window of his father's residence in Newcastle-on-Tyne, which overlooked the river. A thunderstorm was raging overhead, and a great ball of fire suddenly appeared over the river, reportedly moving as fast as a man could run. It was estimated to measure about 2ft in diameter, and when it came opposite the Dunn household it vanished. But before it did so, Mr Dunn managed to expose a plate in his camera.

Over the centuries, further sightings have continued to shake the nerves of witnesses and rattle the brains of many leading experts, who thus far have been unable to offer a definitive explanation for the phenomenon.

Ball lightning, c19th century. (Courtesy of Caroline Rochford)

7) Wearing newspapers

The innovative Victorians were always searching for new ways to improve their quality of life – from generating cleaner energy and recycling waste, to trying out new gardening and interior design techniques.

Without the luxury of central heating or electric blankets, winter nights were often long and cold. In the days when diseases were harder to cure, it was essential to keep warm, thereby reducing the risk of contracting a potentially fatal illness such as pneumonia.

In 1875 health officials recommended that before covering up for the night, two or three large newspapers were to be spread over the entire body and blankets thrown over the top. The result was a warm and comfortable sleep.

Similarly, before taking a cold ride on a boat or coach, or a long walk against the wind, if a newspaper was spread over the chest before buttoning up the overcoat, no chill was felt. No other method for keeping warm was found to be as cheap or effective as this.

8) The discovery of Atlantis

With so much exploration underway, the ancient legend of Atlantis [a fictional island

mentioned within an allegory in Plato's works *Timaeus* and *Critias*] was once again revisited by learned men of the late 19th century, keen to learn its true location at last.

The notable zoologist Charles Émile Blanchard believed that at some point within the human geological period, the region of Labrador in Canada was once connected to Europe by a now subterranean link of land that ran from Scotland, through the Orkney and Faroe Islands, to Iceland and Greenland. Upon investigation, the sea over this supposed tract of land was found to be comparatively shallow, and the islands in questions were therefore, Blanchard deduced, vestiges of the lost land.

His theory was supported by the fact that European animals and plants existed in America alongside species that were atypical to the western continent. Anemones, violets, roses, orchids and lilies were common to both. Certain beetles, spiders and other insects were also found on either side of the Atlantic. The reindeer of Lapland was plentiful in North America; the beaver was a native of the two continents, and so was the river perch, which never left fresh water. This being the case, how did this fish cross the salty Atlantic ocean if the two continents were never connected?

It wasn't the main thrust of his research, but had Blanchard's study led him to the discovery of this mythical lost land?

Caroline Rochford is the author of *Great Victorian Discoveries: Astounding Revelations and Misguided Assumptions*, (Amberley Publishing, 2015). To find out more, [click here](#).

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80-Million-Year-Old Dinosaur Blood Vessels Never Fossilized : DNews

discovery.com

Dec 10, 2015 08:40 AM ETby Laura Geggel, LiveScience



Shown are the approximately 80-million-year-old blood vessels belonging to a duck-billed dinosaur.

Tiny, delicate vessels that carried blood through a duck-billed dinosaur 80 million years ago never fossilized and still contain the beast's tissue, a new study finds.

Researchers discovered the prize specimens on the femur (leg bone) of *Brachylophosaurus canadensis*, a 30-

foot-long (9 meters) duck-billed dinosaur that was excavated in Montana in 2007. But it wasn't immediately clear whether the blood vessels were made of organic matter originally from the dinosaur, or whether they had been contaminated over the years and were now made of bacteria or other components.

Now, several tests show that the specimens are the original blood vessels, making them the oldest blood vessels on record to survive with their original components, the researchers said. [Images: Discovering a Duck-Billed Dinosaur Baby]

The finding adds support to a growing pile of evidence that organic structures such as blood vessels and cells can persist for millions of years without fossilizing, they said. In fact, the blood vessels are only the latest part of the *B. canadensis* fossils the group is examining.

"The other major components of the bone from this dinosaur (bone matrix and bone cells) had already been studied, so we began studying the blood vessels in isolation," study lead researcher Tim Cleland, a postdoctoral researcher of chemistry at the University of Texas at Austin, told Live Science in an email.

The new project allowed the researchers "to focus on the vascular proteins that may hold more evolutionary information," said Cleland, who started the research while studying molecular paleontology at North Carolina State University.

To study the blood vessels, Cleland demineralized a piece of the leg bone and studied it with high-resolution mass spectroscopy. This technique uses an instrument to weigh and sequence proteins and peptides (chains of amino acids that are like proteins, but shorter). One of the proteins within the vessel, myosin, is found in smooth muscles found in the walls of blood vessels, the researchers said.

In a separate test, they used antibodies to detect specific proteins in a thin slice of the blood

vessels. The antibodies revealed the same proteins that the mass spectroscopy did, thus confirming the results.

The researchers also tested the bones of chickens and ostriches, both of which are living relatives of dinosaurs. In both the modern and ancient samples, the peptide sequences were the same as those found in blood vessels, the scientists said.

"This study is the first direct analysis of blood vessels from an extinct organism, and provides us with an opportunity to understand what kinds of proteins and tissues can persist and how they change during fossilization," Cleland said in a statement. "This will provide new avenues for pursuing questions regarding the evolutionary relationships of extinct organisms, and will identify significant protein modifications and when they might have arisen in these lineages."

Now that researchers have sequenced a large number of bird and crocodilian genomes, there should be more information about the proteins made by these creatures. This data may, in turn, help researchers study dinosaur proteins that have survived over millions of years, Cleland said.

"Part of the value of this research is that it gives us insight into how proteins can modify and change over 80 million years," Mary Schweitzer, a molecular paleontologist at North Carolina State University and co-author of the paper, said in the statement. "It tells us not only about how tissues preserve over time, but gives us the possibility of looking at how these animals adapted to their environment while they were alive."

The results were published online Nov. 23 in the Journal of Proteome Research.

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MARTIN THEORE

W. GULDENSUPPE

EXAGGERATED RUMORS CORRECTED.

Some Further Facts Concerning the Babe
Born on East North Street.

Many greatly exaggerated statements have recently been made concerning the child born to Mary Ellen Dillon, residing at No. 227 east North street. While some of these statements probably grew out of the published accounts in the newspapers, others were made merely on hearsay, and were exaggerated as they passed from one person to another. These wild statements, while probably made with no malicious intent, have greatly grieved the family, especially the young mother and the grandmother, and have done them not a little injustice. This afternoon a representative of the REPUBLIC called at Mrs. Dillon's residence, in company with the physician who has charge of the case, to see the child and ascertain how it was getting along. The doctor and reporter were ushered into a cosily furnished room, beautifully neat and clean, and were cordially received by Mrs. Dillon and two daughters. The babe was too busy disposing of a bottle of milk to pay much attention to visitors. Ever since its birth it has been growing rapidly and is now as bright and healthy a child as one could wish to see.

The rumors about the babe's resemblance to a dog or any other animal are entirely without foundation in fact. The babe looks no more like a quadruped, either in face or in body, than any other baby, so it is clear that there were no facts to substantiate the statement that there was such a resemblance. The plain statement of fact is that the baby has a combination of hare-lip and cleft palate, and as is very frequently the case with cleft palate, a portion of the superior maxillary is gone. These points were fully described in the original article in the REPUBLIC, although the terms "cleft palate" and "hare-lip" were not used. The doctor says that it will be possible when the babe is a few months old to perform an operation that will practically do away with both the cleft palate and the hare-lip. This done, the superior maxillary will fill out of itself.

Aside from the hare-lip and cleft palate and the consequent absence of a portion of the superior maxillary, the child is perfect. Its tiny hands do not resemble paws in the least, and it is as bright and healthy as babies ever are at its age. Both the mother and grandmother of the child were very

9 unsolved historical mysteries

Friday 28th August 2015

historyextra.com

Who was Jack the Ripper, what happened to the *Mary Celeste*, and did Richard III *really* murder the princes in the Tower? These are some of the biggest historical mysteries of all time. Here, after scouring 1,000 years of public records at the National Archives in search of answers, Dr David Clarke, the author of *Britain's X-traordinary Files*, charts nine of the greatest unsolved puzzles of modern times.

This article was first published in September 2014

1) The *Mary Celeste*

What became of the crew and passengers of this British-American brigantine remains one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of the sea. The name has since become synonymous worldwide with derelict 'ghost ships'.

The *Mary Celeste* was found drifting 400 miles east of the Azores by the crew of another cargo-carrying vessel, the *Dei Gratia*, on 5 December 1872. The leader of the boarding party told a British board of inquiry at Gibraltar he found the ship was "a thoroughly wet mess", with possessions left behind and the lifeboat missing.

No trace of Captain Benjamin Spooner Briggs, his wife and their young daughter or the seven experienced crew members has ever been found. Many ingenious theories have been put forward by writers such as Arthur Conan Doyle to explain what happened to them. My favourite comes from a 1965 episode of the BBC series *Dr Who*, where the frightened crew jump overboard when the Daleks materialise on the ship while chasing the occupants of the TARDIS.

2) Jack the Ripper

The true identity of this Victorian serial killer continues to elude us 126 years after the gruesome killing spree in London's East End in 1888. In the latest development, an 'armchair detective' claims DNA evidence from the shawl of one of the five known victims has identified Polish émigré Aaron Kosminski – one of a list of key suspects – as the man also known as 'Leather Apron', or 'the Whitechapel Murderer'.

A small cottage industry, Ripperology has grown up around the murders with investigators such as Patricia Cornwell and Russell Edwards sifting through surviving evidence in search of a 'prime suspect.' Among the wild theories that have become legends is one that depicts Jack as a deranged surgeon who killed the women as part of a conspiracy to protect a member of the royal family.

Professor William Rubinstein describes this story as "palpable nonsense from beginning to end". He believes it is the very elusiveness of the solution that continues to make the Ripper mystery so attractive to writers and historians.

3) Kenneth Arnold's 'flying saucers'

The birth of the modern UFO phenomenon can be traced to a sighting by private pilot Ken Arnold of nine peculiar-shaped flying objects over the Cascade Mountains of Washington on the afternoon of 24 June 1947. Arnold told newsmen the bat-wing shaped objects moved like a saucer would "if you skipped it across the water". He calculated their speed as faster than the most advanced jet aircraft of that time.

A sub-editor came up with the phrase 'flying saucers', and the media coverage that followed triggered off an epidemic for seeing things in the sky that continues to this day. Two weeks after Arnold's sighting, the US Army Air Force announced that wreckage from a 'flying disc' had been recovered from a ranch near Roswell, New Mexico.

A modern myth was born, but ever since controversy has raged about what it was that Arnold actually saw. In my opinion, the most likely explanation is a flock of American white pelicans flying in echelon formation. But no one will ever know for sure.

4) The Devil's Footprints

Early on the morning of 9 February 1855, people in towns across southern Devon awoke to find a single line of hoof-like marks in the deep snow as if they had been branded with a hot iron. *The Times* said the marks were found over a distance of 40 miles on both sides of the Exe, as if "some strange and mysterious animal endowed with the power of ubiquity" had created them during the night.

Explanations ranged from an escaped kangaroo, badgers and mice, to a balloon trailing a horseshoe-shaped grappling rope. Superstitious people preferred to believe they were the work of the devil himself. In its summary of the popular theories at the time, a writer in *The Illustrated London News* said "no satisfactory solution" had been found, and "no known animal could have traversed this extent of country in one night... neither does any known animal walk in a line of single footsteps, not even a man".

5) The Shroud of Turin

This piece of linen cloth kept in the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Turin, northern Italy, is one of the most closely investigated objects in human history, yet it retains its secrets. The sacred relic is believed by many Christians to be the shroud in which Jesus of Nazareth was buried.

There is no doubt that it bears a negative imprint of the face and outline of the body of a man who has suffered injuries consistent with crucifixion, but scientists have been unable to reach a consensus about how it was created. Radiocarbon testing by three laboratories in 1988 dated the cloth to the Middle Ages, and this was proclaimed by some as proof it was a medieval fake. But this interpretation remains the subject of intense debate, leading a former editor of *Nature*, Philip Ball, to declare that the relic remains shrouded in mystery.

6) Richard III and the princes in the Tower

In 2012 the skeleton of the last Plantagenet king of England, Richard III, was unearthed from beneath a council car park on the site of Greyfriars in Leicester city centre. The dig that unearthed his remains was instigated by Philippa Langley of the Richard III Society as a direct result of a “strange feeling” she had when visiting the site.

This apparent example of psychic archaeology is not the only mystery that surrounds Richard's life and death. His precise role in the fate of his two nephews – popularly known as ‘The princes in the Tower’ – remains a subject of enduring mystery. The 12-year-old Edward and his nine-year-old brother, Richard of Shrewsbury, the sons of King Edward IV, were lodged in the Tower of London by their uncle, Richard, at the time of their disappearance in 1483.

No one knows exactly what happened to them, but a box containing two small human skeletons was found near the White Tower in the 17th century and, at the time, was widely believed to be the remains of the princes.

7) The Solway Spaceman

On the afternoon of 23 May 1964, an employee of the Cumbrian fire service, Jim Templeton, took photographs of his wife and daughter during a day out at a local beauty spot on the Solway Firth. When he collected the photographs from a chemist, the assistant told him it was a shame one was “spoiled by the man in the background wearing a space suit”.

Sure enough, one image of his youngest daughter Elizabeth clearly shows an enigmatic ‘figure’ floating behind her head. The ‘spaceman’ is dressed in a white suit that resembles those worn by NASA astronauts at the time.

The photograph was examined by Kodak and scrutinised by detectives from the Cumbrian police, who were unable to explain it. Jim Templeton died in 2011 without learning the true identity of the ‘Solway spaceman’. The image remains one of the most perplexing in the history of anomalous photography.

8) Mothman

One dark night in November 1966, four American teenagers claimed they saw a huge bird-like monster with glowing red eyes while cruising along a back road near Point Pleasant in rural West Virginia. They claimed it rose into the air, unfolded its bat-like wings, and pursued them as they sped away in terror. The next morning the sheriff's office held a press conference, and the media dubbed the creature ‘Mothman’ after the *Batman* series that was showing on TV.

Encounters with the demonic ‘bird’ inspired the 2002 movie *The Mothman Prophecies*, directed by Mark Pellington. The film was based upon journalist John Keel's book that chronicled an outbreak of uncanny experiences in the Ohio Valley. He believed the creature was linked in some mysterious way with the collapse of the Silver Bridge in Point Pleasant in December 1967 that killed 46 people, including some mothman witnesses.

9) Monsters of the Deep

Do the depths of our oceans hide undiscovered species of animal such as the great 'sea serpent' that was sighted by the captain and crew of HMS *Daedalus* near the island of St Helena in 1848?

Among the files at the National Archives and the Natural History Museum I found first-hand reports of similar creatures in records from the late 19th to the early 20th century, including one by Arthur Conan Doyle, author of *The Lost World*. Could it be that, as the museum's former keeper of zoology, William Calman, told a puzzled witness in 1929: "...we are not so rash as to suppose that we yet know all of the inhabitants of the sea and it is within the bounds of possibility that you saw some animal that has never been captured or described".

If so, where have they all gone?

Dr David Clarke is the author of *Britain's X-traordinary Files*, published by Bloomsbury on 25 September. To find out more, [click here](#).

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Thursday 03 December 2015

95-year-old SS medic to be tried on 3681 counts of murder over role at Auschwitz camp

German prosecutors are racing to bring surviving perpetrators to justice while there is still time



Auschwitz concentration camp with the inscription "Arbeit macht frei" (work brings freedom) after its liberation by Soviet troops in January 1945
Auschwitz concentration camp with the inscription "Arbeit macht frei" (work brings freedom) after its liberation by Soviet troops in January 1945
Photo: Getty Images Photo: Getty Images

A 95-year-old former SS medic is to stand trial in Germany for his alleged role in the mass killings at Auschwitz.

The former medic, named only as Hubert Z under German privacy laws, faces at least 3,681 counts of accessory to murder after an appeal court overturned an earlier ruling that he was too unwell to stand trial.

The new case comes just months after Oskar Gröning, the so-called "Book-keeper of Auschwitz", was sentenced to four years in prison after he was convicted of being an

accessory to the murder of 300,000 people.

At the time, it was widely thought that Mr Gröning's case might be the last Holocaust trial, but German prosecutors are racing to bring surviving perpetrators to justice while there is still time.



Oskar Gröning, who was charged with 300,000 counts of accessory

In the new case, prosecutors say that Hubert Z was not directly involved in the killings at Auschwitz, but allege he was aware of them and enabled them to take place by being part of the concentration camp's organisational structure.

Hubert Z served as an SS sergeant at Auschwitz from October 1943 to January 1944, and as an SS parademedic from August 15 to September 14, 1944, according to the

to murder for his service as a Nazi SS guard at Auschwitz during WWII indictment.

During his second stint at the concentration camp, at least 14 deportation trains arrived at Auschwitz from as far away as Rhodes and Lyons, and at least 3,681 people were murdered in the gas chambers.

- New 'Auschwitz guard' charged over Nazi crimes

“Given his awareness, the accused lent support to the organisation of the camp and was thereby both involved in and promoted the extermination,” prosecutors said in a statement.



File photo: The entrance of Auschwitz-Birkenau

Hubert Z, who is German, served three and half years in prison after being convicted of membership of the SS by a Polish court in 1948. He has never been tried in connection with the mass killings at Auschwitz. After serving his sentence he returned to Germany.

Two other cases involving former concentration camp staff at Auschwitz are currently pending trial in Germany.

Reinhold H, a 93-year-old alleged former SS member, is facing 170,000

counts of accessory to murder.

An unnamed 91-year-old woman is facing 261,000 counts.

In both cases, defence lawyers are arguing they are too unwell to stand trial.

At least 1.1m people were murdered at Auschwitz, the overwhelming majority of them Jewish, as well Poles, gypsies and Soviet POWs.

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By Nanci Edwards, November 23, 2013

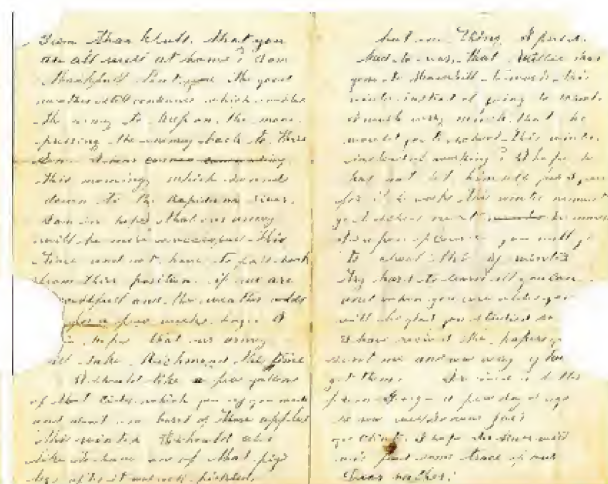
Just in time for Thanksgiving, Project Manager Nanci Edwards shares a family letter from the Civil War, providing a glimpse into what the holiday was like for one Union soldier.

Vidal Thom was my great-great uncle. On Christmas Day, 1861, the 19-year-old enlisted in the Union army in Nashua, New Hampshire.

I transcribed this letter he wrote on Thanksgiving to his younger brother, William "Willie" Thom (my great-great grandfather) from a "camp near Bealton Station, Virginia." In addition to imagining the chicken pie, cider, and plum pudding his brother was enjoying for Thanksgiving (and he was no doubt missing), Vidal also reflects on what he is thankful for, even though he was far from home.



image from <http://aviary.blob.core.windows.net/k-mr6i2hfk4wxt1dp-13112017/82722ba6-2e42-43ae-b42d-73d586755626.jpg>



This is just one of about 20 letters and one diary that came down through my dad's family in New Hampshire



image from <http://aviary.blob.core.windows.net/>

very young looking Vidal looks out at us from this tintype. The tintype is about 6x8 and portrays Thom wearing his military uniform with the gold buttons on his coat painted on the face of the tintype. I just can't get over how young he looks.

Through his letters
and diary entries,
I've been able to

[illegible]

Tintype of Union soldier Vidal
Thom

Nanci Edwards is a project manager at the National Museum of American History. For a closer look at the letter, view the images on Flickr.

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A Santeria priest raided a cemetery and took the remains of 5 skeletons

Dec. 7, 2015, 11:31 PM 553
2015-12-07

businessinsider.com



Amador Medina, right, of Hartford, listens to public defender Johanna Canning during his arraignment at Hartford Superior Court Monday, Dec. 7, 2015, in Hartford, Conn. Media was charged as a fugitive from justice after police found the remains of five bodies stolen from a Worcester, Massachusetts cemetery in Medina's Hartford apartment on Friday that he claimed were used for religious purposes. He faces five counts of disinterment of bodies, conspiracy and accessory before the fact in Massachusetts, according to police. (Cloe Poisson/Hartford Courant via AP. Pool

syndication.ap.org

A man described by police as a Santeria priest caught with human remains in his Connecticut home agreed on Monday to go to Massachusetts to face accusations that he stole the five skeletons from a mausoleum.

Amador Medina, 32, made a brief court appearance in Hartford on Monday and agreed to be taken by police to Worcester, where authorities allege he stole the remains two months ago from a family mausoleum that dates to 1903.

Police arrested Medina on Friday after the remains were found in his Hartford apartment. Medina told police he was a

Santeria priest and wanted the human bones for religious and healing ceremonies, said Hartford Deputy Police Chief Brian Foley.

"We see (Santeria) rarely in Hartford," Foley said. "When we do, it's generally with animals. Very even more rarely you get human remains."

Authorities said they found two garbage bags containing remains on Medina's porch. Inside the apartment, officers found human bones, what appeared to be animal remains and shrines with candles, according to court documents.

Worcester police were expected to pick up Medina in Hartford later Monday and bring him back to their city to face charges.

Medina's public defender didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment on the allegations. His relatives and friends declined to comment outside the courtroom.

Santeria mixes Roman Catholicism with a traditional African faith. Scholars say it was imported to Cuba through slaves brought from the Nigeria's Yoruba tribe, and it is now widely practiced in the Caribbean.

Foley said police have learned that practitioners of Santeria use human bones for medicinal purposes, and the age of the deceased and how long they have been dead are relevant to

those practices.

The remains of three adults and two young children were stolen from the Houghton family mausoleum in Hope Cemetery in Worcester, where police have obtained an arrest warrant charging Medina with five counts of disinterment of bodies and other crimes.

The mausoleum was built for the family of Charles Chandler Houghton, a prosperous boot manufacturer and real estate developer in Worcester, The Telegram & Gazette newspaper reported.

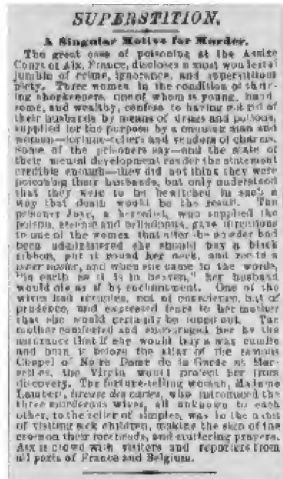
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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

"Superstition: A Singular Motive for Murder" (1868)



"SUPERSTITION.

A Singular Motive for Murder.

The great case of poisoning at the Assize Court of Aix, France, discloses a most wonderful jumble of crime, ignorance, and superstitious piety. Three women in the condition of thriving shopkeepers, one of whom is young, handsome, and wealthy, confess to having got rid of their husbands by means of drugs and potions, supplied for the purpose by a cunning man and woman – fortune-tellers and vendors of charms. Some of the prisoners say-and the state of their mental development render the statement credible enough-they did not think they were poisoning their husbands, but only understood that they were to be bewitched in such a way that death would be the result. The prisoner Joye, a herbalist, who supplied the poison, arsenic and belladonna, gave directions to one of the women that after the powder had been administered she should buy a black ribbon, put it around her neck, and recite a *pater noster*, and when she came to the words, 'in earth as it is in heave,' her husband would die as if by enchantment. One of the wives had scruples, not of conscience, but of prudence, and expressed fears to her mother that she would certainly be found out. The mother comforted and encouraged her by the assurance that if she would buy a wax candle and burn it before the altar of the famous Chapel of Notre Dame de la Garde at Marseilles, the Virgin would protect her from discovery. The fortune-telling woman, Madame Lambert, *tireuse des cartes*, who introduced the three murderous wives, all unknown to each other, to the seller of simples, was in the habit of visiting sick children, making the sign of the cross on their foreheads, and muttering prayers. Aix is crowd with visitors and reporters from all parts of France and Belgium."

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"A Startling Human Monstrosity with the Features of an Animal"

wordpress.com

Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

"A Startling Human Monstrosity with the Features of an Animal"

In January 1887 an Ohio newspaper ran a story about a baby born to an unmarried woman who closely resembled a dog, suggesting that the "monstrosity" was a result of a scare at a fairground sideshow. While the headline probably sold a few papers, they had to retract some of the sensational claims made later on when they heard that their article was largely based on hearsay and rumors.

"LOOKS LIKE A DOG"

A Startling Human Monstrosity with the Features of an Animal, Born in the East End.

Mary Dillon's Sad Case-Her Fright at the Fair Grounds and Its Result-The Child Likely to Live.



Last evening a REPUBLIC reporter quietly received the startling information that a baby had been born in the east end of the city, that was a human monstrosity of a surprising type-that, in other words, the lower part of its face looked like that OF A WILD ANIMAL, and especially a dog. The case was investigated this morning, and while it does not fully come up to the startling mark set by the first statement, it is one of extreme interest to medical science, and will be learned with much interest by the gentlemen of that profession in this city.

This (Tuesday) morning, two young medical students visited the residence of Mr. and Mrs. James Dillon, No. 227 east North street, where they saw the child. It was born a week ago

tomorrow to Mary Ellen Dillon, the elder daughter of the family, and is in many particulars a handsome child. It is a boy, and its physical development is simply remarkable. Its body is as large and as full as many a child's at a month old. Its little limbs are fat and plump, its head large and of good shape, and it is an eminently good-natured and well-behaved child. The young girl's parents are plunged in grief at their daughter's shame, but are treating her with the utmost kindness and forbearance. They are honest, intelligent and kind hearted Irish people of the better class. Four months ago, Mary Ellen brought suit against a young man named Will Butler.

A PLUMBER, FOR BASTARDY.

He skipped out and is now in Detroit, it is said. The constables have been hunting for him ever since and an unsuccessful search of theirs was recently published in the REPUBLIC. His mother was a former fish-monger in market, but is now living off the proceeds of a pension, which, it is said, is so arranged that the marriage of her son, Will, will nullify it. Be that as it may, Butler, to

whom Miss Dillon was, and is yet, devotedly attached, has not been seen since the commencement of this suit, and the girl is now left to bear the shame of wronged womanhood and the parentage of a monstrosity.

The baby is pitifully deformed and it is easy to see how the report of the RESEMBLANCE TO AN ANIMAL could have originated. The superior maxillary-the upper jaw bone-is missing on the left side and there is no trace of at all of the formation commonly known as the "roof of the mouth," the nose itself doing pitiful service for that structure. There is nothing below the nasal bones until the interior maxillary of lower jaw-bone is reached. The mouth itself is almost square in shape and comes clean to the nose on the upper side. On the right side of the mouth there is a large, dark-red excrescence, resembling a small sponge, which adds greatly to the grotesque appearance of the face. The discharges from the only partially formed nasal duct come directly to the mouth, and drying there, protrudes from the misshapen lips in something greatly representing a dog's tusk. The hands are also bent downward, paw-like, at the wrist, adding to the resemblance mentioned in the first rumor.

The unhappy young mother states that last summer, while attending a side-show performance at the Fair grounds, in company with Butler, she received a severe shock from fright from something that she saw. It is a well known fact IN OBSTETRICAL SCIENCE that in cases of pregnancy a severe fright will often impart to the babe a resemblance to the object which caused the shock. The present instance is a case in point.

The child takes nourishment from a spoon in great quantities, and is likely to live."

On Jan. 21, 1887, the same paper ran a follow-up addressing Mary Ellen Dillon's baby in which they addressed some "exaggerated rumors." Their position at that time was that the child didn't look at all like a dog and that the baby suffered from a cleft palate and a "hare-lip." The family was distraught at the reports being printed in the papers, not only about the child but also about the child being born out of wedlock. This must have been before "fact-checking" was a thing. On Feb. 27, the *Springfield Daily Republic* reported that the bastardy suit had been settled when Mary Ellen and Will Butler were married. The blurb was not without a mention of the sensationalism surrounding the baby: "The young woman will be remembered as the mother of the queerly deformed child..."

Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

"A Strange Funeral" For a Headless Corpse (1897)

A STRANGE FUNERAL

Guldensuppe's Body Lacking the Head, Is Burned.

NEW YORK, Dec. 6.—The funeral of Bathruber Guldensuppe, who was murdered at Woodside, Long Island, on June 25, by Martin Thorn and Augusta Nack, occurred this afternoon from an undertaking shop on East Third street, where the body had lain since it was removed from the morgue. All day Saturday and today, from 11 o'clock in the morning until the hour of the funeral, immense crowds of the curious flocked to get a look at the murdered man.

The dismembered body, arrayed in a dress suit, lay in an oak coffin with sliding glass top. The right arm was crossed over the breast. Where the head should have been was a vacant space, save for a photograph, which was placed against the side of the coffin.

Upon the coffinplate was engraved: "Christian W. Guldensuppe, died June 27, 1897, aged 42 years."

The funeral was arranged by two lodges of which the murdered man was a member. Eight members of the New York crew of bathrubbers who worked with Guldensuppe contributed a floral piece about four feet high. Two wreaths were sent in by the lodges. There were no ceremonies whatever.

A STRANGE FUNERAL

Guldensuppe's Body Lacking the Head, Is Burned

NEW YORK, Dec. 5.- The funeral of Bathruber

Guldensuppe, who was murdered at Woodside, Long Island, on June 25, by Martin Thorn and Augusta Nack, occurred this afternoon from an undertaking shop on East Third street, where the body had lain since it was removed from the

morgue. All day Saturday and today, from 11 o'clock in the morning until the hour of the funeral, immense crowds of the curious flocked to get a look at the murdered man.

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The remains were buried in the Lutheran cemetery at Middlesex village, Long Island.

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New York crew of bathrubbers who worked with Guldensuppe contributed a floral piece about four feet high. Two wreaths were sent in by the lodges. There were no ceremonies whatever.

The remains were buried in the Lutheran cemetery at Middlesex village. Long island." (From the *Los Angeles Herald*, 6 Dec. 1897.)

I'd never heard of William Guldensuppe before, but his murder sparked a media frenzy, with journalists clambering over each other for information about the case. This is a more in-depth article about the dismembered masseur, whose body parts were found wrapped in floral oilcloth around the East River after a soured love triangle. The article above reported that Guldensuppe's body was "Burned," but I'm

not sure if he was cremated or if the newspaper meant to print "Buried." (This is just based on the details about the coffin and buried remains.)

Below are just a few of the many articles covering Guldensuppe's murder investigation and the trials of Martin Thorn and Augusta Nack.

NEW YORK, N. Y., July 1.—Mrs. Augusta Nack, who is under arrest in connection with the murder of the man supposed to be William Guldensuppe, spent the night at police headquarters. She insists that Guldensuppe has not been murdered and that he will turn up before long. Mrs. Nack slept well all night. She insisted that she saw Guldensuppe on Saturday afternoon two hours after the first portion of the body was found.

The detectives are still continuing their investigations of the matter and making vigorous search for the man who supplanted Guldensuppe in Mrs. Nack's affections. There is considerable skepticism among the police as to the murdered man being Guldensuppe, notwithstanding the positive identification of the deformed finger by ten of the missing man's friends.

Dr. Cosby, four attendants from the bathhouse and an unknown called at the Morgue today and positively identified the legs found as those of Guldensuppe.

Every effort is being made to extort an admission from Mrs. Nack that she has knowledge of the murder of Guldensuppe. She was subjected to a physical examination by police station matrons this afternoon, after which it was asserted that her person showed marks that indicated that within a few days she had been engaged in a hard struggle. During the examination Mrs. Nack is said to have been almost hysterical and to have nearly broken down several times.

William Guldensuppe Was the Unfortunate Victim.

His Legs Found Off the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Mrs. Augustine Nack, With Whom He Had Lived, Under Arrest for the Murder—It Is Thought Another of Her Lovers, Who Has Disappeared, Was a Party to the Crime.

NEW YORK, June 30.—The headless body in the Morgue has been identified by ten men as that of William Guldensuppe, a rubber in a Turkish bath establishment in this city. The head is lacking to complete the body. The first fragment of the body, from the neck to the waist, was found in East River on Saturday. The second fragment, the lower portion of the trunk, was found in the garden woods, south of Harlem River, on Sunday. The legs were found in the river off the Brooklyn Navy Yard this afternoon.

Guldensuppe had recently been living with Mrs. Augustine Nack, who left her husband for Guldensuppe. Mrs. Nack had quarreled with Guldensuppe last Thursday on account of his supposed unfaithfulness to her. She is held a prisoner at police headquarters and will be charged with murder. A storekeeper at Astoria, L. I., has identified her as the woman to whom he sold oil cloth in which the fragments of the body were wrapped.

Detectives searched the rooms of Mrs. Nack and found hidden there pieces of this red and yellow oil cloth.

The body was found in the river off the Brooklyn Navy Yard this afternoon. The headless body in the Morgue has been identified by ten men as that of William Guldensuppe, a rubber in a Turkish bath establishment in this city. The head is lacking to complete the body. The first fragment of the body, from the neck to the waist, was found in East River on Saturday. The second fragment, the lower portion of the trunk, was found in the garden woods, south of Harlem River, on Sunday. The legs were found in the river off the Brooklyn Navy Yard this afternoon.

Mrs. Nack when arrested was preparing to leave for Europe.

The man Nack, husband of the woman, was arrested to-day, but subsequently released, as he proved a complete alibi. Nack said that his wife was capable of committing the murder, and he suggested that another lover of Mrs. Nack was implicated.

Mrs. Nack is a Bavarian, 38 years old, a large, muscular woman, with a determined face. Her second lover, a man known as "Fred," cannot be found. He is supposed to have been a party to the crime.

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NEW YORK, N. Y., July 5.—Martin Thorn, the man who, with Mrs. Augusta Nack, is accused of murdering William Guldensuppe, the bathhouse rubber, and cutting up his body, was kept on the rack by the police most of the day. He did not confess that he was a murderer, but he made some statements which the officials decline to give out at present, and they say they do not care whether he confesses or not. They claim the evidence they have is sufficient to convict him, and Mrs. Nack at least as an accessory. A significant feature of Thorn's statement is that relating to his whereabouts on the day the murder is supposed to have been committed. Of that day he says:

"Friday morning, June 25, I got out of bed about 9 o'clock and went to E seventh avenue and Thirty-fourth street, to the same saloon where I had been the day before. It must have been about 10 or 11 o'clock when I reached the saloon. I played pinochle with Barber Carl and others. I refuse to say anything further about that day except that I went to Maloney's about 10 o'clock at night and went to bed at 10:45 the same night."

The foregoing relates to this statement.

The important point in this statement is the refusal of Thorn to say anything about his whereabouts on Friday, June 25, from 10 o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock that night. It was some time between those hours that the murder was committed.

District Attorney Olcott had half a dozen witnesses in the case on hand today and took them before the Grand Jury. An indictment was found in a few minutes against Mrs. Nack and Thorn. The police up to tonight had not recovered the watch and clothing of Guldensuppe, which Thorn pawned. They did find some pawn tickets in Thorn's pockets. These, however, were for things Thorn owned himself.

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A Tragic Ending To Bessie Hillyer's Love Story (1888) [wordpress.com](#)

Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

A Tragic Ending To Bessie Hillyer's Love Story (1888)

Some time ago I introduced you to the story of an alleged haunted house in Washington, D.C., a dwelling that currently stands as the Cosmos Club. Mary Townsend, a wealthy and superstitious woman, moved to D.C. with her husband Richard. They planned to build a grand mansion on property once owned by Judge Curtis J. Hillyer but construction was halted after Mary remembered a witch's prophecy from her childhood.

The main idea of the warning was that if Mary ever lived under a new roof, she would meet her death within a year. Richard suggested that the incorporation of the Hillyer roof and the framework of the existing building into their new mansion, a compromise enough to satisfy his bride.

Their dream home was completed by 1901, but Richard would only enjoy it for a short period of time. In 1902 he fell from a horse and fractured his skull.



*Bessie Hillyer,
published in The
Princeton Union, 24
Feb. 1898*

By 1912 servants reported seeing strange things in the home such as a sad female form dressed in gray on a staircase and a ghostly marching band "playing" a washboard, a phone, a jug, and a drum. Originally Mrs. Townsend dismissed the paranormal activity until she saw the parade of spirits for herself. After looking into the Hillyer's family history she learned of a tragedy associated with the roof and became a believer. *The Salt Lake Tribune* printed that stories of ghosts in the Hillyer home were nothing new, but that information was withheld from the Townsends when they purchased the property.

I wondered why a 19-year-old socialite would end her own life via rat poison so I combed the old newspapers. I hoped to find additional accounts of spookical sightings following Bessie's death on April 12, 1888 but so far those have eluded me.

What I did find were reports of Bessie's suicide, which made papers across the nation due to her social standing and her involvement in the love triangle which

likely set her untimely demise into motion.

She was set to marry W.L. Trenholm, whose father was comptroller of the currency, on February 3, 1888 but instead eloped with twenty-year-old DeGrassie ("Grassie") Bulkley in December 1887. The secret nuptials took place in Baltimore; however when they returned to Washington they separated with Bessie returning to her father's home. (Why they decided to live separately remains a mystery.)

The New York National Police Gazette reported that Bessie's father immediately "locked his truant daughter in her room and refused to allow her husband to see her." The disapproving father sought to dissolve the union through annulment or divorce, asserting that his daughter had been coerced or tricked into marriage and the groom underage. The first allegation was soon dismissed when officials present at the ceremony saw no signs that either party was there against their will.

On December 30 Mr. Hillyer, Bessie, DeGrassie and Senator Stewart (a Hillyer family friend) met at H.C. Cady's office where the young bride was asked to pick between her husband and Mr. Trenholm. She chose DeGrassie and the pair lived together as a married couple in a hotel and then a private home for less than two weeks.

When she returned home this time she was alone. *The Newberry Herald and News* printed that it was at that time official divorce proceedings began but the particulars of the separation were unknown.

Doctors were called to the Hillyer home on the morning of Wednesday, April 11 after Bessie had "taken very ill." Despite pumping her stomach to remove the poison and constant medical attention she died on Thursday around 9:00.

Grassie, totally shocked by the news, blamed Judge Hillyer for his estranged wife's suicide.

Grassie Bulkley has made a statement at Washington, charging that Judge Hillyer is responsible for the death of his daughter. He says: "We loved each other dearly, and if it had not been for the more than inhuman treatment that she suffered at Judge Hillyer's hands, she would have been alive and happy to-day. Of course I am bitter against Judge Hillyer, because my wife's death is on his hands and he is no less than a murderer."

New Ulm Weekly Review 25 April 1888

Bessie was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in an unmarked grave.

I held off on publishing this entry for over a year, hoping to dig up additional information about the alleged hauntings at the Cosmos Club.

While I didn't fulfill the original goal I gained a tiny bit of insight into the circumstances surrounding a conflicted young woman's death.

I noticed that the papers described Bessie and/or her behavior as "rash" or "fickle" but similar adjectives weren't used for involved males. While blanket negative generalizations of women were common in historic newspapers it doesn't make them any easier to swallow.

Additional Source Articles:

Special to the Star.
WASHINGTON, Dec. 22.—(Washington social circles were stirred to their depths today by the confirmation of the rumor of a sensational elopement and happy marriage. The contracting parties were Miss Bessie Hillyer and J. C. Buckley. Miss Hillyer is the daughter of Mr. Hillyer, of the firm of Hillyer & Hillyer. She made her debut in Washington society last winter and was quite a belle. She is beautiful, accomplished and witty, and was a great favorite in society. Mr. Buckley is twenty years old and son of J. H. Buckley, president of the United Medical Association. He is the cousin of the National Bank of Washington. It appears that the couple went to Baltimore early yesterday morning, not without a marriage license, and were solemnized in the residence of Mr. Dr. Ferguson and were quietly married. Mr. Southerland, son of the Postoffice Inspector, was the only person accompanying the young people from this city, and with members of Mr. Ferguson's family formed the only witness of the ceremony. After the marriage the young couple returned to this city. In the afternoon Mrs. Buckley returned to her father's home and calmly announced the fact of the marriage, and the guests returned to his home. Mr. Buckley went to his desk at the bank today, but declined to say anything about the marriage. A peculiar rumor of the rumor is that at Hillyer was expected to be married to Miss Franklin of the Press and now holding position in the Philadelphia press. The announcement of the elopement had been made in the papers. Mr. Franklin has been coming to Washington regularly to visit his brother and was in the city last Sunday. The fact that this rumor was spread is denied that neither the parents of the bride nor the young lady herself consider the ceremony binding, and that she will not come to him to marry should he so far have been persuaded by her to do the part of the young man.

Sensational Divorce in Prospect.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 23.—Mr. Grassie Bulkley, who eloped with Bessie Hillyer in last December, and about whose elopement there was much gossip at the time, has now separated from his wife. Each is now living with their respective parents. Divorce proceedings will probably follow and prove sensational.

A GLEANER OF LOVE.

The last elopement of the young and handsome couple.

Washington, January 23.—It was a double elopement of some magnitude at least, if the young Bulkley and Miss Hillyer. On the 22nd of December, these young people went to Baltimore, and were married in the city of the old town.

When the young lady returned to her home, she was met by her father, Mr. Hillyer, who was in the city at the time.

The young man, Mr. Bulkley, was in the city at the time.

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A BAD ENDING.
A Black Woman's Suicide. Mrs. Gracie Bulkley, daughter of Judge J. H. Bulkley, died Wednesday night, at her father's residence, from the effects of poison, when with wedding bells on the festive day. This sad fate fell on the young bride, who was married to Mr. J. W. Trenholm, son of the comptroller of the currency, on February 12. It was reported on the 13th of last month that the bride had been found dead in a room at the residence of her father, Judge Bulkley, in Baltimore. The bride was found by the physician of the young couple, who was called to Baltimore by Mr. Trenholm, son of the comptroller of the currency, and who was found dead in a room at the residence of her father, Judge Bulkley, in Baltimore. It was reported on the 13th of last month that the bride had been found dead in a room at the residence of her father, Judge Bulkley, in Baltimore. It was reported on the 13th of last month that the bride had been found dead in a room at the residence of her father, Judge Bulkley, in Baltimore.

A SORROWFUL ROMANCE.
Last Act of the Hillyer-Bulkley Engagement Scandal.
THE YOUNG BRIDE BURED.
The young bride, after a short illness, died at her father's residence, Judge Bulkley, in Baltimore, on Wednesday night, at her father's residence, from the effects of poison, when with wedding bells on the festive day. This sad fate fell on the young bride, who was married to Mr. J. W. Trenholm, son of the comptroller of the currency, on February 12. It was reported on the 13th of last month that the bride had been found dead in a room at the residence of her father, Judge Bulkley, in Baltimore. The bride was found by the physician of the young couple, who was called to Baltimore by Mr. Trenholm, son of the comptroller of the currency, and who was found dead in a room at the residence of her father, Judge Bulkley, in Baltimore.

at the scene of the tragedy.
WASHINGTON, April 13.—Mrs. Gracie Bulkley committed suicide last night by taking poison. Mrs. Bulkley was the only daughter of Judge Hillyer, and was about to marry Mr. Trenholm, of South Carolina, the son of Comptroller Trenholm, when she eloped with young Bulkley. Immediately after the marriage they separated, and she returned to her father's house. In a few days she went to live with her husband, but a short time afterwards returned to her parents. It is supposed she was temporarily insane.

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Mrs. Nack is a Bavarian, 38 years old, a large, muscular woman, with a determined face. Her second lover, a man known as "Fred," cannot be found. He is supposed to have been a party to the crime.

NEW YORK, July 13.←The head of William Guldensuppe is said to have been found by some boys at Branchport, encased in sail cloth and plaster of paris.

Medieval Academy of America

A Fairy Tale from before Fairy Tales: Egbert of Liège's "De puella a lupellis seruata" and the Medieval Background of "Little Red Riding Hood"

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culture groups. In it he incorporated many Latin translations of vernacular proverbs.³⁷ Because many of the proverbs originated among the uneducated countryfolk, Sigebert of Gembloux (ca. 1030–1112) referred to the poem as a book “*metrico stilo de enigmatibus rusticanis*” (“in metrical style about the sayings of peasants”).³⁸

In dedicating the poem to his erstwhile schoolmate Bishop Adalbold of Utrecht (ca. 970–1026), Egbert discussed his sources in oral tradition and set forth his pedagogic purpose in exploiting them. As one passage in this dedication makes apparent, Egbert saw oral tradition as a precious resource in teaching because it was at once familiar from everyday speech in the native language and yet novel when written in the learned language:³⁹

In communi enim sermone multi sepe multa loquuntur, et plurimis ad usum necessariis exemplis illa uulgi sententia profertur; quod quidem hausi, mecum id reputans, quod in his plurima uersarentur utilia, et si aliquatenus retineri possent perspicua, quæ, quoniam nusquam scripta fuissent, quo magis memori pectore seruarentur, indiligentes propterea facerent auditores. Unde ego, quæ comminisci per horas interdiu noctuque potui, singulis ea uersiculis, sepe duobus, interdum tribus, uti in ordine scriptos uidebis, mandans, præterea nouis atque uulgaribus fabellis aliquot diuinisque paucis interserens, in duobus tantum coaceruaui libellis.

In common speech many people often say many things, and that popular wisdom is expressed in numerous exempla, which are essential to use; I drew upon this material, in the belief that numerous useful things are found in it, and if in some way the clear insights could be retained, they would make neglectful students into attentive listeners (since they had been written down nowhere, they would be preserved in a more mindful heart). For this reason I gathered into only two little books those things, which I was able to recall over many hours by day and night, committing them to single verses, often to two verses, sometimes to three — as you will see, written in order of length — moreover interlarding some new and popular stories with a few theological matters.

Egbert's rationale for resorting to oral tradition resembles that of ancient grammarians and rhetoricians who commented upon the importance of fables in elementary education.⁴⁰ To cite an author who is unlikely to have been known to Egbert but whose views are typical of the school tradition,

³⁷ The proverbs have received fullest treatment in Samuel Singer, *Sprichwörter des Mittelalters*, 1 (Bern, 1944), pp. 65–142.

³⁸ See *Catalogus Sigeberti Gemblacensis monachi de viris illustribus* 147.947–50, ed. Robert Witte, *Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters* 1 (Bern and Frankfurt/M., 1974), p. 93. Because *aenigma* is nearly synonymous with *prouerbiu* and *parabola*, the title as a whole is roughly equivalent to the later *Li proverbes au vilain*, on which see Eckhard Rattunde, *Li proverbes au vilain: Untersuchungen zur romanischen Spruchdichtung des Mittelalters*, *Studia Romanica* 11 (Heidelberg, 1966).

³⁹ *Fecunda ratis*, ed. Voigt, p. 1. The translation is mine.

⁴⁰ Paulus Beudel, *Qua ratione Graeci liberos docuerint, papyris, ostracis, tabulis in Aegypto inventis illustratur* (Monasterii Guestfalorum, 1911), pp. 34–37 and 51–56, and August Hausrath, “Das Problem der äsopischen Fabel,” *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum* 1 (1898), 305–22 (here: pp. 312–14).

Quintilian noted the value of fables in weaning young children from the nursery tales to which they are exposed before entering grammar school:⁴¹

Igitur Aesopi fabellas, quae fabulis nutricularum proxime succedunt, narrare sermone puro et nihil se supra modum extollente, deinde eandem gracilitatem stilo exigere condiscant: uersus primo soluere, mox mutatis uerbis interpretari, tum paraphrasi audacius uertere, qua et breuiare quaedam et exornare saluo modo poetae sensu permittitur. Quod opus, etiam consummatis professoribus difficile, qui commode tractauerit cuicumque discendo sufficiet.

Therefore let pupils learn to paraphrase Aesop's fables, which follow closely upon the stories of the nursery, in plain and unexcessive language and thereafter to effect the same simplicity of style in writing. [Let them learn] to resolve metrical verses [into prose], next to convey its meaning while changing the words, and then to reshape it more freely in a paraphrase; in this it is permitted both to abridge and to elaborate, so long as the poet's meaning remains intact. This task is difficult even for polished instructors, and the person who handles it well will be qualified to learn anything.

To resort to the terminology in vogue today, both Quintilian and Egbert appreciated the advantages of appropriating "low culture" in the early stages of training children in the elements of "high culture."

But whatever he professed in the preface to Adalbold, Egbert obviously did not measure up to a folklore collector in the twentieth-century sense, and it would be wrongheaded to judge him so. Most important for our purposes, his terse telling in the *Puppis* of the story "De puella a lupellis seruata" is in a Latin verse form that bears no marks of an oral storytelling:⁴²

De puella a lupellis seruata

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| | Quod refero, mecum pagenses dicere norunt, | |
| | Et non tam mirum quam ualde est credere uerum: | |
| | Quidam suscepit sacro de fonte puellam, | |
| | Cui dedit et tunicam rubicundo uellere textam; | 475 |
| 5 | Quinquagesima sancta fuit babtismatis huius. | |
| | Sole sub exorto quinquennis facta puella | |
| | Progreditur, uagabunda sui inmemor atque pericli, | |
| | Quam lupus inuadens siluestria lustra petiuit | |
| | Et catulis predam tulit atque reliquit edendam. | 480 |
| 10 | Qui simul aggressi, cum iam lacerare nequirent, | |
| | Ceperunt mulcere caput feritate remota. | |
| | "Hanc tunicam, mures, nolite", infantula dixit, | |
| | "Scindere, quam dedit excipiens de fonte patrinus!" | |
| | Mitigat inmites animos deus, auctor eorum. | 485 |

⁴¹ *Institutio oratoria* 1.9.2–3, ed. M. Winterbottom, Oxford Classical Texts, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1970), 1:58, lines 1–9. The translation is mine.

⁴² Egbert of Liège, *Fecunda ratis*, book 2 (*Puppis*), lines 472–85, ed. Voigt, pp. 232–33. I have changed Voigt's punctuation in four places, by replacing a full stop with a semicolon at the end of 475 and a comma with a full stop at the end of 476, by deleting a semicolon at the end of 477, and by adding a comma in 478; double quotation marks have been substituted for single ones. The translation is mine.

About a Girl Saved from Wolf Cubs

- What I have to relate, countryfolk can tell along with me,
 and it is not so much marvelous as it is quite true to believe.
 A certain man took up a girl from the sacred font,
 and gave her a tunic woven of red wool;
 5 sacred Pentecost was [the day] of her baptism.
 The girl, now five years old, goes out
 at sunrise, footloose and heedless of her peril.
 A wolf attacked her, went to its woodland lair,
 took her as booty to its cubs, and left her to be eaten.
 10 They approached her at once and, since they were unable to harm her,
 began, free from all their ferocity, to caress her head.
 "Do not damage this tunic, mice," the lisping little girl said,
 "which my godfather gave me when he took me from the font!"
 God, their creator, soothes untame souls.

The differences between Egbert's fourteen hexameters and an oral folktale are indisputable: Egbert's poem is written in the cramped style that typifies the *Fecunda ratis*,⁴³ whereas the folktale is oral; Egbert's poem constitutes a permanent lasting text, the folktale a one-time performance; Egbert's poem is for the classroom, the folktale for another sort of social occasion (and an occasion at which we cannot even hazard a guess). Thus when Egbert claims that countryfolk (*pagenses*) can tell the story along with him, he means at the very least in a different language and style. These are major *mutata mutanda*. But in spite of them, Egbert remains a folklore collector of the only sort who could have been encountered around the millennium — a male member of the literate class who, to indoctrinate youths, drew upon material that had currency among common people.

When evaluating any written text that purports to present a version of an oral tale, the reader must gauge the reliability of the sources and the treatment or use of them. Let us begin with the issue of authenticity. In the case of Egbert's "De puella a lupellis servata" we have two grounds for judgment: Egbert's avowal to Adalbold in the preface that he used popular traditions and his profession in the first line of the poem that peasants told the same story. The latter statement admits, albeit obliquely, that Egbert owed a debt to popular sources.⁴⁴ Although it is possible that Egbert was lying in the first line of the poem, he would have gained nothing from his audience: he would have undermined his authority as a teacher, since the boys in his classroom would have known immediately if the story had not been popular.

The real issue is not authenticity but rather the sort of authenticity — not

⁴³ On Egbert's style, see Franz Brunhölzl and F. J. Worstbrock, "Egbert von Lüttich," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh and others, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1978–), 2:361–63 (here: col. 362), and Maurice Hélin, *A History of Medieval Latin Literature*, 2nd ed., trans. Jean Chapman Snow (New York, 1949), pp. 61–62.

⁴⁴ At the risk of nitpicking it is worth observing that Egbert does not claim to have heard the story from peasants: pace Albert Wesselski, *Versuch einer Theorie des Märchens*, Prager Deutsche Studien 45 (Reichenberg i. B., 1931), p. 20. Rather, he asserts that both he and peasants know the story.

whether or not Egbert took from the peasants but *what* he took from them and did with it. For all his candor about sources, Egbert turns reticent when it comes to the modifications he introduced. Granted, he altered the style of any prior telling when he translated it into Latin. Did he make equally substantial changes in the content of the story? For want of any unadulterated "peasant version" this question cannot be answered fully; but we can say that he had to have been sufficiently faithful to the folktale for the story still to have been recognizable to his audience. For instance, we can infer that the "original" featured a little girl, for otherwise Egbert would have been free to make the protagonist a little boy — surely a casting that would have made sense for his male audience, if they had not known the story with a girl as the protagonist beforehand.

It is sometimes posited that the literary fairy tales written from the seventeenth and later centuries "not only obliterated the original folk perspective and reinterpreted the experience of the people for them but also endowed the contents with a new ideology."⁴⁵ If more than a half millennium earlier Egbert had imposed an ideology upon a folktale, the ideology would have been that of his literate ecclesiastic culture. In this case, Egbert's version would be an attempt, not to re-create an oral folktale in Latin, but rather to tease out a religiously useful message from the narrative. How easily a Christian ideology can be imprinted upon folktales can be seen in twentieth-century adaptations and interpretations of the Grimm version of "Little Red Riding Hood" by evangelical Christians and anthroposophists. For instance, in one short religious pamphlet the beginning of the story "is used to tell young children how to avoid the wolf, who is no longer the sexual seducer but rather the Devil himself. This short religious pamphlet seeks to point out the dangers of a lack of faith. From the original tale the children were supposed to learn to listen to their mother and to avoid the evil wolf, and it is an easy step to have the wolf represent the Devil and to teach that faith alone can overcome this dangerous enemy."⁴⁶

Such interpretations jar on the ears of some twentieth-century academics. Thus, for instance, Dundes characterizes the anthroposophical interpretations as "one of the most curious sets of folktale interpretations of all those proposed" and accords little space to them, even in comparison with other interpretations with which he disagrees.⁴⁷ His resistance to religious interpretations of the tale is noteworthy for two reasons. One is that future generations might find readings generated in our own times just as quaint and dated as the Christian interpretations of earlier times. Is it more bizarre to construe the story as revealing the dangers of the devil than to follow Michel Foucault, who sees "Little Red Riding Hood" undergoing a "pedagogization of children's sex" as part of a two-century-long war against onanism, or Erich Fromm, who does not hesitate a moment in his Freudian

⁴⁵ Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell*, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Wolfgang Mieder, "Survival Forms of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in Modern Society," *International Folklore Review* 2 (1982), 23–40 (here: p. 36).

⁴⁷ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 208.

dissection of the story: "Most of the symbolism in this fairy tale can be understood without difficulty. The 'little cap of red velvet' is a symbol of menstruation. The little girl of whose adventures we hear has become a mature woman and is now confronted with the problem of sex"?⁴⁸ It seems fruitless to press these stories for one underlying meaning or to seek any one interpretation that will apply to all different versions of the story, since each telling can have its own meaning and can demand its own interpretation.

The other reason for taking note of Dundes's coolness toward religious interpretations is that it sheds light on the reluctance of folklorists to give Egbert's poem its due. There seems to be a tacit assumption that a fairy tale version with religious implications could not be "original," that a nonreligious folktale is presumably more truly "popular" than a religious one; for when the poem has been discussed, either it has been classed as a Christian legend and therefore unrelated to fairy tale, or else its Christian elements have been silently deleted, with ensuing damage to its integrity.

What is Christian in Egbert's poem? A first glimpse of Christianization would be in the second line, as Egbert protests that his story is a real miracle and not a fantasy. In the words of Hans Robert Jauss, "Das Wunderbare im mittelalterlichen Märchen vom 'Röttkäppchen' ist noch ganz an das Übernatürliche der christlichen Legende gebunden."⁴⁹ But it may be an exaggeration to call the marvelous in Egbert's poem "wholly bound to the supernatural of Christian legend," for in the very next line Egbert perhaps guides us into the indeterminacy of "once upon a time" with the pointed vagueness of the word "Quidam" ("A certain man"). Other less arguably Christian traits are the signaling of baptism in the third, fifth, and thirteenth lines, and the moralization in the fourteenth. The fourteenth can be omitted without damage to the story, although its excision would deprive the poem of its culminating ambiguity; for who is to say whether the untame souls are those of the wolves who menace the girl or those of the baptized, who are brought from an animal into a human state through the sacrament? Apart from the fourteenth, none of the lines in which baptism is mentioned overtly can be left out without harming the logic of the narrative. Thus the heart of the miraculous truth that Egbert discerns in the story is that no matter how young and helpless the person, no matter how fierce the danger, baptism has the power to protect. With such a message, the story would have made an ideal exemplum in preaching to persuade peasants to accept baptism for their young children. When Egbert wrote, churchmen were growing concerned over the souls of infants who died. Because they had not yet pro-

⁴⁸ Foucault, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners*, 1, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York, 1978), p. 36 (quoted by Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, p. 16), and Fromm, *The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths* (New York, 1951), pp. 235-41 (here: p. 240).

⁴⁹ Hans Robert Jauss, *Untersuchungen zur mittelalterlichen Tierdichtung*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie 100 (Tübingen, 1959), p. 67. Compare p. 68: "Die Suche nach der 'einfachen Märchenform' eines einheimischen 'Tiermärchens' führte zu der christlichen Legende. Inwieweit dieses Ergebnis für die Frage nach dem Wesen des mittelalterlichen Volksmärchens überhaupt kennzeichnend ist, kann hier nicht entschieden werden."

gressed to urging the baptism of newborns (canon law permitted the celebration of the sacrament only on the vigils of Easter and Pentecost, except to those in extremis), they must have felt pressure to convince peasants to bring their infants for baptism at the first possible Easter or Pentecost.⁵⁰ Whether or not the story ever served as an exemplum, the salience of such features as the godfather, baptism, baptismal gift, and Pentecost justify the experiment of reading it in Christian terms.

To date, Egbert's poem has been analyzed mainly in accordance with the principles of folklore motif studies to demonstrate whether or not it belongs to the same complex of stories as the later "Little Red Riding Hood." The story recounted by Perrault and Grimm was schematized first by folklorists as follows:

1. Wolf's Feast. (a) By masking as mother or grandmother, the wolf deceives and devours (b) a little girl (Red Riding Hood) whom he meets on his way to her grandmother's.
2. Rescue. (a) The wolf is cut open and his victims rescued alive; (b) his belly is sewed full of stones and he drowns; (c) he jumps to his death.⁵¹

A more detailed schema was elaborated by Marianne Rumpf, who saw the bare essentials of the story as being the gifts brought by the girl to the grandmother, the encounter with the wolf, the wolf at the grandmother's, the cannibalism, and the questions of the girl to the swallower (about the ears, eyes, nose, teeth, and mouth of the supposed "grandma").⁵² Rumpf assigns to her two-page examination of Egbert's story the quizzical caption "Die Geschichte in der Fecunda ratis des Egbert von Lüttich, eine Urform des Rotkäppchen?"⁵³ On the basis of her analysis Rumpf maintains that Egbert's poem is most definitely not a medieval anticipation of "Little Red Riding Hood" (AT 333), since it lacks the constitutive cannibalistic motif (which is to say, the swallowing of the grandmother and Little Red Riding Hood by the wolf) and other essential motifs.

If Egbert's poem is not connected with "Little Red Riding Hood," then what is it? In one attempt to resolve the question, Rumpf relates the eleventh-century verses to stories about wolf children, of which an ancient example would be Romulus and Remus and a modern one Mowgli: a child who has been carried off by a wild animal grows up and is later saved.⁵⁴ The most important parallel in medieval Germanic tradition is Wolddietrich, who received his name after being unharmed among wolves when he was an infant.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ See Susan Ann Keefe, "Baptism," in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Strayer, 2 (New York, 1983), pp. 83–86 (here: p. 85).

⁵¹ Antti Aarne, *The Types of the Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography*, rev. Stith Thompson, 2nd ed., Folklore Fellows Communications 3 (Helsinki, 1961), no. 333.

⁵² Marianne Rumpf, *Rotkäppchen: Eine vergleichende Märchenuntersuchung*, *Artes Populares: Studia Ethnographica et Folkloristica* 17 (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), pp. 46–58.

⁵³ Rumpf, *Rotkäppchen*, pp. 66–67.

⁵⁴ She is followed by Hans Ritz, *Die Geschichte vom Rotkäppchen: Ursprünge, Analysen, Parodien eines Märchens* (Emstal, 1981), pp. 139–40.

⁵⁵ Wesselski, *Versuch*, p. 19, points out that in both Egbert's poem and the saga of Wolddietrich God intervenes to calm the wolves and protect the child.

An analogue in medieval Irish tradition is the story of Cormac's birth.⁵⁶ In the language of Stith Thompson's motif index, Egbert's poem contains both B 777.1, "wild animal miraculously tamed," and D 1442.12, "magic garment tames animal." Furthermore, Rumpf sees the red clothing here as being foreign to the later story: here it must be understood in the context of Germanic werewolf stories, where it serves an apotropaic function. She does not conjecture whether this apotropaic quality of red is a literary device, a folk belief, or a scientifically observable effect.⁵⁷ Certainly red is not known to ward off animals such as bulls, although Vergil reported that hunters stretched cords with scarlet feathers (known as a "scare" — Latin *formido*) at the edges of woods so as to intimidate game as it tried to escape.⁵⁸

The equation of Egbert's story to the *Wolfdietrich* legend and its congeners has a few flaws, the most striking of which is that Egbert gives no inkling the little girl stays in the woods to grow up among the wolves. Accounts of children who have been raised by female animals after being lost or abandoned by their human parents have abounded from antiquity to the present century. These accounts of feral children range from the purely fictional to the purportedly factual. At the factual end of the spectrum, the taxonomist Carl Linnaeus (1707–78) subsumed wolf children in the tenth edition of his *Systema naturae* (1758) as a subclass of *homo ferus*: the *Juvenis lupinus Hessianus*.⁵⁹ According to written reports that had been credited for centuries before Linnaeus, the wolf child of Hesse was found running wild in the woods in 1344. He was reputed to have lived for four years with wolves who had excavated a special burrow and outfitted it with leaves for him.⁶⁰ Even recently, serious scholars such as the psychologist Arnold Gesell have placed credence in the existence of wolf children, such as the child Kamala whose case received notoriety in the 1910s and 1920s.⁶¹

Although these cases of purported zoanthropy are fascinating, they seem irrelevant to "De puella a lupellis seruata." Egbert offers no more hint that the wolf in his story (which he presents as a *lupus* and not a *lupa*!) is a surrogate parent than that it is the typical greedy beast of fables, which was

⁵⁶ The most convenient account of both *Wolfdietrich* and Cormac remains Sophus Bugge, *The Home of the Eddic Poems, with Especial Reference to the Helgi-Lays*, 2nd ed., trans. William Henry Schofield (London, 1899), pp. 67–96.

⁵⁷ For an overview of different qualities that have been associated with red from ancient times through the present, see *Herder Lexikon Symbole*, 6th ed. (Freiburg, 1978), p. 135.

⁵⁸ Vergil, *Georgics* 3.372, "puniceaeue agitant pavidos formidine pennae" ("they [do not] hunt beasts frightened by the 'scare' of the crimson feather"), ed. R. A. B. Mynors, *Oxford Classical Texts* (Oxford, 1969), p. 76; and *Aeneid* 12.750, "ceruum aut puniceae saeptum formidine pennae" ("[as when a hunting dog has caught] a stag hedged about by the 'scare' of the crimson feather"), p. 416.

⁵⁹ Robert M. Zingg, "Feral Man and Cases of Extreme Isolation of Individuals," in J. A. L. Singh and Robert M. Zingg, *Wolf-Children and Feral Man*, Contributions of the University of Denver 4 (New York, 1942), pp. 127–276 (here: p. 177).

⁶⁰ Lucien Malson, *Wolf Children* (London, 1972), p. 39.

⁶¹ Arnold Gesell, *Wolf Child and Human Child: Being a Narrative Interpretation of the Life History of Kamala, the Wolf Girl* (New York, 1941). Wesselski, *Versuch*, p. 19, mentioned modern wolf children in connection with Egbert's poem.

standard fare in the elementary textbooks that Egbert's schoolboy audience would have known only too well, or of the later Reynard cycle, which may have been spreading through oral tradition already at this date. Egbert's wolf is in no wise anthropomorphized: it neither nurtures as a wolf mother does nor acts greedy and talks as a typical fabular wolf does.⁶² If affinities may be detected between his beast and any conventional wolf, it is the wolf of Christian symbolism: the diabolic beast that would prey upon the faithful flock, were it not for the vigilance of both earthly pastors and the heavenly Good Shepherd. If one focuses on the situation rather than on the particular animal, an interesting analogue can be found in the account of Daniel in the lions' den: a believer is protected from usually voracious animals through the might of God.⁶³

A general shortcoming in Rumpf's analysis is that it plays down the contribution of many elements to the distinctive nature of a story: not only narrative motifs, but also themes, settings, and characters, together with their attributes and the functions they serve. Despite a century of struggles toward a scientific narratology of folktales,⁶⁴ folktale analysts have not attained a universally applicable diagnostics for fixing the absolute minimum of constituents that endue a story of a given type with its distinctive imprint. The complex of features that lends a story its essence will vary from tale to tale, cultural milieu to cultural milieu. This variability does not render the process of analysis futile but it does recommend that analysts be flexible. If viewed less rigidly, Egbert's poem reveals such significant similarities to "Little Red Riding Hood" as the title character (a little girl with a red riding hood), the main prop (a red riding hood), the lead villain (a wolf), the climactic event (an improbable but safe escape from the lead villain when all seems lost), and two main themes (the dangers of the woods and of being eaten by wolves).

When the poem is seen as an organic whole, Rumpf's explanation of the red clothing as a werewolf repellent fails to satisfy. Although in the title Egbert (if he and not a scribe was responsible for the titles) identifies the heroine only as a little girl, within the poem the first attribute singled out is her tunic woven of red wool.⁶⁵ The hooded design of the garment in Egbert would have been more obvious if he had used the medieval Latin term *cappa* rather than opting for the classical and liturgical connotations of *tunica*.⁶⁶ The word *tunica* usually applied to a surcoat and specifically to a surcoat that

⁶² Mariarosaria Pugliarello, *Le origini della favolistica classica* (Brescia, 1973).

⁶³ Dan. 6 and 14.30–42.

⁶⁴ The most famous publication to result from these struggles is Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott, rev. Louis A. Wagner, 2nd ed., Publications of the American Folklore Society, Bibliographical and Special Series 9; Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics 10 (Austin and London, 1968).

⁶⁵ All except for two of the titles, which appear only in the second book, were written by one hand: see *Fecunda ratis*, ed. Voigt, p. vi.

⁶⁶ This observation was made by Wesselski, *Versuch*, p. 19. The word *cappa* is Late Latin: see *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* (Leipzig, 1900–), 3:354, lines 23–36. It was employed in medieval Latin to designate various sorts of clothing, among which were the linen fabrics used to cover infants at baptism: see *Mittelaltersches Wörterbuch bis zum ausgehenden 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Otto Prinz and others (Munich, 1960–), 2:238, lines 35–40.

was white, not necessarily a garment with a hood that could correspond to a little red riding hood;⁶⁷ but a close inspection of lines 11 and 12 leads to the conclusion that the tunic in Egbert's poem must have a hood: as the wolf cubs begin to nuzzle the girl's head, she warns them not to damage the tunic!⁶⁸ In other words, the robe of the girl in Egbert must have been a hooded garment similar to the *coiffure* of her counterpart in Perrault and Grimm — the red hooded cape which the English "Little Red Riding Hood" was intended to translate.

Whatever import the cut of the robe had in Egbert's source or sources, he had specifically Christian reasons for stressing the hood. He took pains to convey the presence of the hood, since the covering of the head with a veil was an essential event in the baptismal liturgy with which he was concerned.⁶⁹ As this moment in the ceremony was explicated by the ninth-century liturgist Amalar of Metz, the covering extends the symbolism of the baptismal robe: it signifies the protection of the Lord that is secured through baptism:

DE TEGUMENTO CAPITIS.

Et hoc de veteri testamento adsumptum est. Sic enim scriptum est in Exodo: *Filios quoque illius, quin Aaron, applicabis, et indues tunicis lineis, cingesque balteo, Aaron scilicet et liberos eius, et inpones eis mitras.* Iam percepta gratia sacri baptismatis, non se confidat viribus suis, sed semper deprecetur, ut protectus sit Domini et caelesti auxilio. Protectionem Domini praeclaram volumus intellegere per linteum quo caput tegitur.⁷⁰

ON THE COVERING OF THE HEAD

This too derives from the Old Testament; for thus it is written in Exodus (29.8–9): "You shall bring his sons also" (that is to say, Aaron) "and shall dress them in linen tunics, and gird them (that is, Aaron and his children) with a sash, and put miters on them." Now when he has received the grace of sacred baptism, he should not rely on his own strength, but he should ever pray to be protected by the aid of God and heaven. We wish to understand the renowned protection of the Lord by the linen with which the head is covered.

The garments of the newly baptized, like those of saints and of the clergy, were sometimes felt in the early Middle Ages to possess magical properties against storms and fire.⁷¹ In Egbert's story the efficacy of the baptismal symbol is such that the wolf cubs, having set out to devour their prey, are reduced

⁶⁷ See pseudo-Alcuin, *De divinis officiis* 38, in Migne, PL 101:1173–1286 (here: col. 1238BC), and Albert Blaise, *Le vocabulaire latin des principaux thèmes liturgiques* (Turnhout, 1966), p. 107.

⁶⁸ The first to conclude that the tunic was really a hooded cape was Rudolf Kögel, *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur bis zum Ausgange des Mittelalters*, 1/2 (Strasbourg, 1897), p. 273. The only recent scholar even to mention the possible significance of these lines — albeit with considerable skepticism — has been Ritz, *Die Geschichte vom Rothäppchen*, pp. 139–40.

⁶⁹ Joseph H. Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, 1986), p. 302.

⁷⁰ Amalar of Metz, *Epistula Amalarii ad Carolum imperatorem de scrutinio et baptismo* 45, ed. Johann Michael Hanssens, *Amalarii episcopi opera liturgica omnia*, 1, *Studi e Testi* 138 (Vatican City, 1948), p. 247, lines 9–16. The translation is mine, with quotation of the English of *The Holy Bible: Douay Rheims Version* (Baltimore, 1899).

⁷¹ See Valerie I. J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, 1991), pp. 187–88 and 190.

instead to performing the equivalent of another event in the baptismal liturgy, the anointment of the head.⁷²

The title character of the "Little Red Riding Hood" story has grown so important that her name has become a common noun, one star in the bright constellation that numbers Cinderella and Bluebeard among its luminaries.⁷³ Why is the name so important? In part because anyone who remembers the story as it has reached us through the cultural tradition of Perrault, Tieck, and especially the Brothers Grimm remembers it with this chief character and eponymous title: so intimately linked are the two that merely hearing the title or name of the main character suffices to trigger memory of the whole tale.⁷⁴ But another part of the explanation is the hermeneutic pressure of a name that seems on an intuitive level to have a meaning, to offer a key that will unlock the true significance of the whole story. The redness emerges as the central mystery of the story, eliciting interpretations that shift with the intellectual vogues of the cultures that produce the interpreters. Thus in the nineteenth and early twentieth century the red was seen as encoding a solar myth,⁷⁵ whereas more recently it has been deciphered as referring to menarche or lasciviousness among young girls. As one critic put it, "Much ado has been made about her fetish of the red hood or cap. Clearly her innocence in the story has been suspect."⁷⁶

Folklorists have been understandably impatient with the welter of wild speculation. In exasperation Paul Delarue compared the effects of the red hood on critics to those of the toreador's red cape on bulls: "Tel le taureau qui fonce sur la cape rouge que lui présente le toréador et s'acharne sur une enveloppe vide, les folkloristes se sont précipités sur cette coiffure rouge que leur offrait la version de Perrault. . . ."⁷⁷ He went on calmly to argue that far too much attention has been paid to the name and to the color it conveys. In the opinion of most folklorists who have occupied themselves with the story, the appearance in the story of this name — along with both the riding hood and the associated color — was a red herring, the result of Perrault's whimsy or fraudulence: "The independent oral versions present a remarkable identity from one extremity of the zone of extension of the tale to the other. They permit one to ascertain that the red headdress of the little girl is an accessory trait peculiar to the Perrault version, not a general trait on which one could base oneself to explain the tale."⁷⁸ According to this reason-

⁷² Amalar, *Epistula de scrutinio et baptismo* 44, 1:247.

⁷³ Soriano, *Les contes de Perrault*, p. 13.

⁷⁴ Linda Dégh, "Grimm's 'Household Tales' and the Place in the Household: The Social Relevance of a Controversial Classic," *Western Folklore* 38 (1979), 83–103 (here: p. 102), and Mieder, "Survival Forms of 'Little Red Riding Hood,'" p. 35.

⁷⁵ Paul Saintyves [= Emile Nourry], *Les contes de Perrault et les récits parallèles* (Paris, 1923), pp. 215–29. For references to other solar explanations, see Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, p. 59, n. 1.

⁷⁶ Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, p. 1.

⁷⁷ Delarue, "Les contes merveilleux de Perrault," p. 251.

⁷⁸ Paul Delarue, "The Story of Grandmother," in Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 18. Delarue's view has been accepted almost universally by folklorists: Dundes, *Little Red*

A Fairy Tale from before Fairy Tales: Egbert of Liège's "De puella a lupellis seruata" and the Medieval Background of "Little Red Riding Hood"

By Jan M. Ziolkowski

All knowledge is partial, and the scholarship devoted to "Little Red Riding Hood" demonstrates this again and again.

— Alan Dundes¹

One vivid description of folktale research, still applicable although more than a half century old, reads, "Folktale study is like a desert journey, where the only landmarks are the bleached bones of earlier theories."² Because theories have proven to be so ephemeral in comparison with the tales themselves (although which are more entertaining remains debatable), it might seem prudent to place more stock in the tales and less in the theories or at least to take an eclectic approach toward theorizing so as to hedge bets; but not all scholars of folktales exercise more circumspection now than their predecessors did fifty years ago. For example, in *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook* Alan Dundes — one of the most prominent American folklorists of our day — adduces no material dated from before 1697 that is related to the tale "Little Red Riding Hood" but manages nonetheless to question sharply the very notion of valuing early written evidence. By scrutinizing a short Latin poem written in the first quarter of the eleventh century, I hope to refute Dundes's dismissal of literary evidence and to underscore the pertinence of studying medieval literature in coming to grips with that beautiful and elusive phenomenon to which English-speakers give the name "fairy tale."

The doubts about literary remains that Professor Dundes voices are deeply

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¹ "Interpreting 'Little Red Riding Hood' Psychoanalytically," in Alan Dundes, ed., *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook* (Madison, Wis., 1989), pp. 192–236 (here: p. 192).

² Emma Emily Kiefer, *Albert Wesselski and Recent Folktale Theories*, Indiana University Publications: Folklore Series 3 (Bloomington, 1947), p. 9 (quoting Reidar Th. Christiansen, who in turn was quoting Arthur Bonus).

ing, Perrault noticed that folktales were sometimes named after the garments that characters wore, and he decided on this basis to endow his story — his fakelore — with the air of real folklore by introducing the cap or riding hood. Others have supplemented Delarue's argument with the intimation that Perrault made the hood red because the color "was generally associated at the time with sin, sensuality, and the devil."⁷⁹

The contention that folktales and characters in them were now and then named after features of their clothing is well founded. One pertinent example of both processes can be seen in "Rognvalds þátrr ok Rauðs" ("The Tale of Rognvald and Raud"), an Old Norse short story (*þátrr*) in the *Flateyjarbók* in which a foundling (originally named Gunnarr) who has been abandoned by his father is adopted by a childless old couple who call him Raud — red — after the color of the tunic (*kyrtill*) in which he is dressed; interestingly, this tale shares with Egbert's "De puella a lupellis seruata" a baptismal theme, since it ends in the baptism and reconciliation of Raud and Rognvald.⁸⁰ In such stories as this the garment serves as a token to establish the royalty of the abandoned child.⁸¹ The Middle English *Lay Le Freine*, a Breton lay from the beginning of the fourteenth century, states explicitly that the clothing in which the abandoned heroine is lapped was meant to guarantee that "whoso hir founde schuld have in mende/That it [the child] were comen of riche kende."⁸² The coverlet serves at a crucial moment to identify the abandoned daughter to her mother.

Delarue conceded that the redness of the tunic in Egbert and of the riding hood in Perrault lent the two stories about little girls and wolves a similarity, but he saw it as being superficial and coincidental: "S'il est aussi question d'une fillette et d'un loup dans cette histoire, qui est présentée comme le récit d'un événement réel qu'auraient rapporté des paysans, il est difficile d'y voir une version ou la forme première de notre conte. Sans doute, la robe de la fillette est-elle rouge, comme la coiffure de l'héroïne dans la version de Perrault. Mais le 'chaperon rouge' n'est qu'un trait accessoire, particulier à

Riding Hood: A Casebook, p. 14; Soriano, *Les contes de Perrault*, pp. 160 and 178; and Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, p. 6.

⁷⁹ Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, p. 9.

⁸⁰ On this short story, see Joseph Harris, "Folktale and Thátrr: The Case of *Rognvald and Raud*," *Folklore Forum* 13 (1980), 158–98. Harris generously made available to me a typescript translation of "The Tale of Rognvald and Raud."

⁸¹ This point was made by Harris, "Folktale and Thátrr," p. 171: "The abandoned child is often identified by his rescuer as royal through S334 Tokens of royalty (nobility) left with exposed child."

⁸² Lines 143–44, in *Middle English Verse Romances*, ed. Donald B. Sands (New York, 1966), p. 238. Although this lay shares a few features with "Little Red Riding Hood," it differs in at least two major ways: Freine acquires her name, not from the cloth, but from the ash tree in which she was found; and Freine is christened, not before, but after her abandonment. The Middle English poem is based on Marie de France's *Fresne*, the only *lai* in her collection to take its title from the name of the heroine: *Fresne* 121–34, in *Les lais de Marie de France*, ed. Jean Rychner, *Classiques Français du Moyen Age* 93 (Paris, 1973), p. 48. The motif was borrowed from Marie by Jean Renart, *Galeran de Bretagne*, ed. Lucien Foulet, *Classiques Français du Moyen Age* 37 (Paris, 1925).

cette version, non un trait général du conte. . . .”⁸³ Rumpf echoed this conclusion: “Es erscheint mir gewagt, nur aus der Tatsache, daß in der einen Geschichte aus dem 12. Jahrhundert [*sic*] eine rote Tunica als Patengeschenk an ein kleines Mädchen eine Rolle spielt, auf Zusammenhänge mit dem Rotkäppchenmärchen zur schließen.”⁸⁴ Going his own direction as usual, Wesselski refused to dismiss the resemblances; but even he understated the points of contact between the two stories: “In den Märchen ist also von der Geschichte — Zwischenglieder haben ja wohl bestanden — außer dem Wolf nichts übrig geblieben als die Erinnerung an die rote Cappa, der eine Zug, der weder in der Geschichte noch in den Märchen eine motivische Bedeutung hat, gleichwohl aber die Namen Chaperon rouge und Rotkäppchen rechtfertigt. . . .”⁸⁵

Delarue and most other folklorists who have occupied themselves with Perrault’s tale have assumed it to be a literary bowdlerization of one “original oral tale.” According to this thinking, Perrault departed from his oral sources and drew the detail of the red riding hood out of thin air.⁸⁶ But must we accept that the folktale tradition behind Perrault was so clear and uniform? Must we expect a story to retain complete stability over hundreds of years? Is there not a paradox or an irony that folktales can be so immutable that an oral tradition recorded in 1885 is more faithful to the tradition than a written version recorded nearly two hundred years earlier, but that a folktale known to cleric and peasant alike in 1022 should disappear without a trace? Although faith in stability is one of the premises of the Finnish method,⁸⁷ Friedrich von der Leyen argued long ago that “We cannot always get to the original of these motifs, for many of them have changed greatly. Kaleidoscopic variation takes place in the course of migration.”⁸⁸ Wesselski went even further in hypothesizing that the oral tradition had no stability except in the proximity of a written text.⁸⁹ Indeed, even Dundes declares that “Variation is a key concept in folkloristics. It is variation that in part distinguishes folklore from so-called ‘high culture’ and ‘mass culture.’”⁹⁰

The hypothesis that the story as we know it originated fully formed, a kind of narrative Athena that surged mature from the head of its creators, must be balanced against the possibility that elements from two or more different stories fused over time. Thus an alternative hypothesis is that “Little Red Riding Hood” was born through both cultural changes and modifications

⁸³ Delarue, “Les contes merveilleux de Perrault,” p. 227.

⁸⁴ Rumpf, *Rotkäppchen*, p. 67.

⁸⁵ Wesselski, *Versuch*, p. 20.

⁸⁶ Rumpf, *Rotkäppchen*, p. 67: “Woher Perrault den Namen Rotkäppchen hat, konnte bisher nicht festgestellt werden.”

⁸⁷ Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, pp. 53–55. It would be worthwhile to investigate how overtly the insistence on stability was expressed as an attempt to put folktale studies on a footing with other “sciences” — to enable the establishment of folktale stemmas comparable to textual stemmas in philology.

⁸⁸ Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 15.

⁸⁹ Wesselski, *Versuch*, pp. 153–57.

⁹⁰ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 193.

introduced by storytellers. It is conceivable that the apotropaic power of the girl's dress — and the dress could have been apotropaic for one reason in popular tellings (red to ward off wolves) and for another in Egbert's account (red to symbolize the salvific capacity of Pentecost and baptism) — was forgotten. Even if it lost its apotropaic power, the red hood could have persisted in the story because of its capacity as a storytelling device to attract the attention of children. In literature, as in stoplights and clothing, red catches the eye and is felt to warn and protect.⁹¹ The motif of the red hood would have constituted a truly unbroken thread in the history of the narrative or, to press into service Goethe's well-known phrase, *ein roter Faden*.⁹² But if the red no longer functioned to protect the girl, the storytellers would have been forced to improvise other means of saving their little heroine — unless they were content, as Perrault was, to watch her become wolf food. Under this impetus the Grimm brothers, their informants, or the tradition behind them could have conflated two stories, one about a red-garbed girl who was carried off by a wolf but later saved from the beast thanks to her clothing and another about a girl either devoured by a wolf or else released from it by a male agent. In other words, the character of Little Red Riding Hood in a tale akin to Egbert's could have been attracted toward another story with a wolf but without a function for the hood. If this conflation took place, then one of the results could have been the fairy tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" as we have it: a prop that was a constitutive element in one story became a frustrating mystery in another.

Before rejecting the idea that Egbert's poem is only one of two or more stories that combined eventually to form "Little Red Riding Hood," we should recall that folklorists have argued for cognate relationships between other equally dissimilar pairs of folktales. To take an example close to home, it is widely agreed that the Grimm version of "Little Red Riding Hood" grafts an ending from the tale type *The Wolf and the Kids* (Grimm, *KHM*, no. 5; AT 123) onto roots of the tale type *The Glutton/Red Riding Hood/The Six Little Goats* (AT 333). If elements from two different tale types can merge so easily and successfully, then why should we rule out that elements from other lost tale types — such as *The Red-Garbed Girl* and *The Girl Swallowed by Wolf* — coalesced over time?⁹³ There can be no doubt that much medieval popular literature perished, sometimes surviving only in a brief title or allusion but sometimes not even receiving such fragmentary immortality.⁹⁴

⁹¹ See Joachim Knuf, *Unsere Welt der Farben: Symbole zwischen Natur und Kultur* (Cologne, 1988), chap. 3: "Rot: Vom Nutzen einer Farbe," pp. 48–83 (especially "Das Warnsignal am Anfang aller Kultur," pp. 81–83), and Rudolf Gross, *Warum die Liebe rot ist: Farbsymbolik im Wandel der Jahrtausende* (Düsseldorf and Vienna, 1981), p. 79 ("Das Problem der sexuellen Drohung"): "So sind die 'Neidfleckerln,' die überall dort angewendet werden, wo man am Mensch und Tier bangt, rot: auf den Kleidern der Kinder, am Brautwagen, am Pferdegeschirr."

⁹² Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809), part 2, chap. 2.

⁹³ Bolte and Polívka, *Anmerkungen*, 1:234 (stating that the conclusion of "Rotkäppchen" derives from AT 123); Dundes, pp. 202–3 (assuming that "AT 123 and AT 333 are probably cognates, possibly subtypes of the same general tale type"); and Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, p. 15 (stating that "the Grimms borrowed a motif from the folk tale *The Wolf and the Seven Kids*").

⁹⁴ See R. M. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of Medieval England*, 2nd ed. (London, 1970).

To extend this alternative hypothesis, the detail of the redness can be shown to have had a special significance in Egbert's version — and a significance that could easily have sunk into oblivion over the centuries between Egbert and Perrault. Here it is worthwhile pondering Egbert's insistence on Pentecost, which he touches upon in the fifth line (and it is not irrelevant that five is *quinque* in Latin!) and stresses through a sonic architecture of *quod*, *quam*, *quidam*, and *cui* that culminates in the alliteration of *quingagesima* with *quinguennis*: through her age, the girl almost embodies the day which is the fiftieth after Easter. Those of us who are acquainted with British English associate this holiday with the color white: the name Whitsunday ("White Sunday") recalls the custom of clothing the newly baptized in white baptismal robes on this day.⁹⁵ To be sure, the white baptismal robes must have been a frequent sight on Pentecost, since except in cases of emergency baptism could take place only in the two seasons of Easter and Pentecost.⁹⁶ But in most of the Middle Ages the predominant liturgical color of the day would have equally justified the name "Red Sunday," since there were many symbolic reminders that Pentecost began with the tongues of red fire which appeared to the apostles (Acts 2.3): "red rose leaves were scattered from the roof of the church";⁹⁷ the Gospel book was covered in red, to signify the blood of Christ;⁹⁸ and, most important, the vestments for that day were red.⁹⁹ Thus the red of the surcoat conveys the power of a Pentecostal baptism, as embodied in a red-clothed celebrant. Finally, it bears noting that the *rubicunda tunica* in Egbert's poem does not rule out a white baptismal garment: the red surcoat that the girl was given after being taken from the font could have been placed over the customary white garb of a candidate for baptism.

Whether or not the common people of Egbert's day — the peasants — recounted a girl-and-wolf story in which the liturgical color and baptisms of Pentecost figured prominently is beyond our ken. It is conceivable that Egbert, the cleric, Christianized a nonreligious story of a little girl in a red garment who was rescued miraculously from being devoured by a wolf: aware

⁹⁵ On the white chrismal robe of the newly baptized, see Rabanus Maurus, *De clericorum institutione* 1.29, ed. Migne, PL 107:293–420 (here: col. 313C); *Missale Gothicum* 263, trans. Edward C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, 2nd ed., Alcuin Club Collections 42 (London, 1970), p. 162; *Bobbio Missal* 250, trans. Whitaker, *Baptismal Liturgy*, p. 212; *Stowe Missal* 33, trans. Whitaker, *Baptismal Liturgy*, p. 220; *Sarum Rite*, trans. Whitaker, *Baptismal Liturgy*, p. 247; and Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, pp. 103, 109, 293, 302, and 304.

⁹⁶ On the restriction of baptism to Easter and Pentecost, see John D. C. Fisher, *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation*, Alcuin Club Collections 47 (London, 1965), pp. 52, 58; and Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, pp. 295–96.

⁹⁷ Raymond Deloy Jameson, "Whitsunday," in *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, ed. Maria Leach and Jerome Fried (San Francisco, 1949), pp. 1175–76 (here: p. 1175).

⁹⁸ St. Germanus of Paris, *The Second Letter*, trans. Whitaker, *Baptismal Liturgy*, pp. 164–65.

⁹⁹ Innocent III, *De sacro altaris mysterio* 1.65, "De quatuor coloribus principalibus, quibus secundum proprietates dierum vestes sunt distinguendae," ed. Migne, PL 217:799–802 (here: col. 801AB); William Durandus, *Rationale* 3.18.4 (Naples, 1859), p. 130; and Heide Nixdorff and Heidi Müller, *Weisse Westen, rote Roben: Von den Farbordnungen des Mittelalters zum individuellen Farbgeschmack* (Berlin, 1983), pp. 45–53 ("Liturgische Farben," especially pp. 45–46).

that the redness of the garment was too familiar an element in his sources to allow for its omission, he made a virtue of a necessity by coordinating the color with the symbolism of the liturgy. If Christian features were imposed by Egbert in this fashion, then his raw material could have been a story much closer to the Perrault and Grimm versions. For instance, Egbert could have deliberately expurgated for children a story with strong sexual implications: he could have made an originally pubescent or adolescent heroine very young (even in times of precocious sexual maturation the adjective *quinquennis* and the noun *infantula* place her securely in childhood); he could have replaced the menstrual associations of red with the religious symbolism of Pentecost; and he could have protected the girl from the sexual implications of being eaten by a wolf ("elle a vu le loup!") by having her set free earlier in the story.¹⁰⁰ Yet had Egbert made such thoroughgoing changes in the oral tradition, would he still have dared tell his young charges that peasants could tell the story along with him?

Wherever the credit is due, the device of the red hood is integrated smoothly into the story through the color symbolism. In the scene that Egbert stages, the little girl is protected miraculously from the wolves directly through the virtue of her tunic. The red tunic, which brackets the narrative (lines 4 and 12) as effectively as it clothes the little girl, can safeguard her precisely because of the liturgical context in which it is bestowed upon her: on Pentecost as a baptismal gift from her godfather. The baptismal rites buffer the girl from the wolves within the story, just as in figurative terms they shield any Christian from the violence of the infernal wolf, the devil. Even the motif of the head caressing or licking could belong in the same liturgical nexus, since the unction of baptismal candidates on the head with chrism was believed to convey the gift of the Holy Spirit — the gift of tongues!¹⁰¹

As in Perrault, the red riding hood embodies the affection of a relative for the little girl. Here too we may speculate about an alteration in the tale through cultural changes over hundreds of years. In the Middle Ages the relationship of godfather and godchild was one of the strongest forms of kinship. At baptism the parents and godparents were directed to protect the child from fire, water, and all other dangers until the age of seven years. Furthermore, the godparents were enjoined to take part actively in the religious education of the godchild.¹⁰² Finally, they usually gave the godchildren gifts at baptism — not just money, as is sometimes believed, but also jewelry, livestock, and clothing such as dresses.¹⁰³ Before the mid-eleventh century the level of technology in Western Europe restricted the spectrum of principal colors to variations upon white, black, and red. (The fact that dyeing was

¹⁰⁰ Soriano, *Les contes de Perrault*, p. 442.

¹⁰¹ After the baptism a presbyter anointed the candidates' heads with chrism: Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, p. 17. In the early history of baptism the unction was not seen to be related to the giving of the Holy Spirit: Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 18–19. But later it was believed to convey the gift of the Holy Spirit: Fisher, *Christian Initiation*, pp. 38, 45, 53–54, 56, and 63–65.

¹⁰² Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, pp. 285–86 and 305–32.

¹⁰³ Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, p. 51.

limited to shades of red is preserved in the use of the English noun and verb "color" to refer to red in the face and in the common application of the Spanish *colorado* to designate red in general.)¹⁰⁴ Of these principal colors, red may have been the most appropriate for a baptismal gift, not because it was the preferred color for the female sex (the system of allocating pink to one gender and blue to the other had not yet developed), but because it was a luxurious color that suggested through its very tint the special generosity and affection of its giver.¹⁰⁵

In many later times and places the relationship between godparent and godchild has grown ever less important than it was in medieval Western Europe.¹⁰⁶ Therefore the prominence of the godfather — who is the first and last person mentioned in Egbert's poem, who has no identity (*quidam*) until after he has performed his godfatherly function of taking his godchild from the font (as is stressed in both lines 3 and 13), and who as godfather exercises the same power over the wolves (10–13) as God the Father and Creator does over souls (14) — could have been baffling in some societies. Once the reason for the inclusion of the godfather was no longer understood, the giver of the robe — now no longer comprehensible as a baptismal gift — was replaced by a close relative who could have produced such an item — namely, a grandmother. This process would have been hastened if oral storytelling was shifting from a particular social class — peasants — back to a particular sex and age group. After an interlude in the Middle Ages when folktales and proverbs were attributed to the social class of peasants, the old women struck back: the old women and nurses who had told *fabulae aniles* in antiquity endured to relate old wives' tales and Mother Goose rhymes in the early modern period — and to enhance the roles of characters like themselves in the stories they told.¹⁰⁷

But the rise of the grandmother meant that the godfather was only displaced or disguised, not completely removed. Because the robe was no longer hallowed by baptism and Pentecost, the male figure who lurked in the background of Egbert's version was drafted for active service in the Grimm tale and its analogues: if the red riding hood could not control the wolf, the woodcutter could. Consequently, both stories would contain the two opposite forms of male nature that Freudian interpreters such as Bruno Bettelheim single out: the dangerous seducer (wolf), who represents the id, and the salvational father figure (godfather/hunter), who stands for the ego.¹⁰⁸ Such a psychological construction would have been foreign to Egbert, for whom the rite of baptism — and through it, God — outweighed in importance any

¹⁰⁴ See Michel Pastoureau, *Couleurs, images, symboles: Etudes d'histoire et d'anthropologie* (Paris, 1989), pp. 20 and 22 ("L'héritage antique: blanc, rouge, noir").

¹⁰⁵ See Nixdorff and Müller, *Weisse Westen, rote Roben*, pp. 137–40 ("Rosa und Hellblau in der Säuglingskleidung").

¹⁰⁶ Lynch, *Godparents and Kinship*, p. 49.

¹⁰⁷ Here I extend an observation made concerning proverbs by Gaston Paris, in his review of *Fecunda ratis*, ed. Voigt, *Journal des savants* (1890), pp. 559–72 (here: p. 562, n. 1).

¹⁰⁸ Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York, 1974), pp. 166–83.

human agent in the poem. To him the marvelous truth was not the godfather, but the salvational power of baptism.

With the woodcutter we are nearly out of the woods, but we still need to discuss the woods themselves. Perrault's version and most of its relatives are usually classified among cautionary tales, designated formally by the German terms *Schreckmärchen* or *Warnmärchen*¹⁰⁹ or the French *un récit de mise en garde*.¹¹⁰ Among these tales, Perrault's version is unusual in having a bad ending:¹¹¹ the wolf leaps upon Little Red Riding Hood and gobbles her up. This conclusion brings home in particularly brutal form the general danger of being disobedient and careless,¹¹² alongside the specific one of going out alone in woods.¹¹³ Egbert's tale also shows traces of being admonitory: the girl is snatched when she is "wandering heedless of her peril," apparently near the woods and during the half-light of dawn — the place and time in which wolves were reputed to pose the gravest threat to human beings.¹¹⁴ But Egbert's tale hews more closely to the usual line of *Warnmärchen* in that it concludes happily. In this way Egbert's poem, like the Grimm version of "Little Red Riding Hood," appears designed to win over its audience of schoolchildren by presenting as principal character a child who seems to have a God-given right to be protected.¹¹⁵

At the risk of drawing an invidious comparison, Egbert's ending could be said to surpass Perrault's in both its attention to child psychology and its economy. To start with the issue of child psychology, Egbert's ending warns children *and* offers religious instruction, but not at the price of frightening children out of their wits. Whereas Perrault's tale closes disturbingly with both the girl and her grandmother entombed within the belly of the wolf,

¹⁰⁹ See Rumpf, *Rothkäppchen*, pp. 99–103 (on the meaning of the tale as a *Warnerzählung*). On the rise of such stories for children, see Gottfried Henssen, "Deutsche Schreckmärchen und ihre europäischen Anverwandten," *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 51 (1953), 84–97, and Marianne Rumpf, "Ursprung und Entstehung von Warn- und Schreckmärchen," *Folklore Fellows Communications* 160 (1955), 3–16.

¹¹⁰ Soriano, *Les contes de Perrault*, p. 340.

¹¹¹ Soriano, *Les contes de Perrault*, p. 150.

¹¹² Zipes, *Trials and Tribulations*, p. 1: "But whatever her reputations and destiny, she has always been used as a warning to children, particularly girls, a symbol and embodiment of what might happen if they are disobedient and careless."

¹¹³ Soriano, *Les contes de Perrault*, p. 151. For an attempt to establish a typology of forest symbolism in medieval literature, see Paolo Golinelli, "Tra realtà e metafora: Il bosco nell'immaginario letterario medievale," in *Il bosco nel medioevo*, ed. Bruno Andreolli and Massimo Montanari, Biblioteca di Storia Agraria Medievale 4 (Bologna, 1988), pp. 97–123. The notion of the woods as a magic realm in which miracles occur seems more relevant to the Grimm version than to either Egbert or Perrault: see Hedwig von Beit, *Symbolik des Märchens: Versuch einer Deutung*, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (Bern, 1952–57), 1:46–47.

¹¹⁴ Barry Holstun Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men* (New York, 1978), pp. 209–10.

¹¹⁵ Max Lüthi, *Once upon a Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales*, trans. Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald (Bloomington, 1976), p. 63, classifies "Little Red Riding Hood" as "one of a group of children's fairy tales, so called because children are the principal characters in them," and adds, "A child has a natural right to be protected and cared for. It is said of Little Red Riding Hood that everyone who saw her liked her, and that grandmother 'simply couldn't think of anything else she might give the child.'"

the story part of Egbert's poem finishes on the lightest of notes, as the little girl either honestly mistakes the wolf cubs for mice because of their small size and unwolfishly gentle ways or else teases them by calling them mice when she knows full well that they are actually wolves.¹¹⁶ Whatever the explanation, the girl is faced with progressively less menacing creatures: the wolf (*lupus*) gives way to the diminutive whelps (*catuli*), which in turn are scaled down to mice (*mures*). Her own smallness and helplessness are communicated in the choice of the word *infantula*, rather than the earlier *puella*, to describe her.¹¹⁷ It is easy to imagine this imperative to the young wolves, so effective in its reduction of savage beasts to almost cuddly harmlessness and timidity, as the final grace note in an oral folktale. As for the economy, unlike the outcome of either Perrault's or Grimm's versions, that of Egbert's story is linked directly to the name of the character, and the setting of the conclusion in a woodland den of wolves is well suited to a cautionary message about the forest and wolves.¹¹⁸

The economy of Egbert's version is perfect: every prop is indispensable and has a meaning. For this reason, if one subscribed to the debatable hypothesis that the original forms of folktales are usually the most logical or coherent,¹¹⁹ one could build a plausible case that his "De puella a lupellis seruata" represents a truly original — or a more nearly original — version of one "Little Red Riding Hood" story. In this prototype the celebrated garment — the little red riding hood — plays a role more important than simply distinguishing the central character. With how many other Ur-"Little Red Riding Hoods" it amalgamated, and over how long a span of time before becoming AT 333, cannot be said.

This reading of Egbert's poem has been too speculative to settle all questions about the medieval background of "Little Red Riding Hood" to everyone's satisfaction, for it is just as true now as it was in 1947 that "the war of the folklorists goes on, with no immediate settlement in sight."¹²⁰ But it will have fulfilled its main purpose if it has shaken some widespread complacencies about the worth or worthlessness of written evidence in general and about the origins of "Little Red Riding Hood" in particular. At the least it has itself acted as a cautionary tale against the deep pitfall of limiting research only to demonstrably oral literature without taking stock of evidence from earlier times and from written literature. The creed that purely oral versions (which are de facto modern versions) have an intrinsic claim to priority over written versions (whether medieval or nineteenth century) is untenable. Too few folklorists acknowledge the urgency of locating and holding onto written

¹¹⁶ Perhaps the wolves are called mice because mice would be the pests — as the etymology of the word "rodent" indicates — most likely to *gnaw* at garments.

¹¹⁷ The theme of God's mercy to helpless females is sustained in "De lamentis uiduę," the seven-line selection with which Egbert follows this one in the *Puppis* (lines 486–92, ed. Voigt, p. 233).

¹¹⁸ For a tabulation of the settings used in different versions of "Little Red Riding Hood," see Rumpf, *Rothäppchen*, pp. 59–60.

¹¹⁹ Von Sydow points out the dangers of this hypothesis: "Folktale Studies," p. 233.

¹²⁰ Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 75.

evidence because it records otherwise irretrievable folklore;¹²¹ and too few bear in mind the principle that Walter Anderson claimed to have enunciated to Kaarle Krohn in 1911: "Every *Märchen* investigator must also be one of literary history."¹²² Just as medieval literary scholars would be unwise to shun the methods of the social sciences when serviceable, so folklorists would be foolhardy to convince themselves that they could routinely dispense with the fruits of philology, such as written evidence gathered from earlier cultures. Both philology and folkloristics stand to lose if the two fields are encouraged to drift further apart. As C. W. von Sydow observed acutely, ". . . it is evident that collaboration between philology and the study of folklore is of supreme importance. Philologists can produce much material of very great value to folklore research. . . . But the oral material is no less important for placing the contents of the ancient sources in the living whole to which they belong, and for supplementing their statements, which are often both fragmentary and otherwise corrupted."¹²³ Literary folklorism has its limitations but also its values.

Older written versions can be as helpful as newer oral versions in interpreting folktales and in graphing their trajectories across time. In this case, a little piece of medieval Latin literature that was unearthed more than a century ago has not been exploited by folklorists as it should have been. An eleventh-century poem raises the possibility that Perrault did not invent out of whole cloth either the garment or the character Little Red Riding Hood, whatever his other tamperings with the story may have been. The poem could be testimony that AT 333 was anticipated by more than one proto-AT 333, all of which except this one went unrecorded until Perrault. If so, it should not be regarded as *the* ancestor of Perrault, but it should be registered somewhere on the family tree.

This analysis of "De puella a lupellis seruata" suggests that if you dismiss the very character and title "Little Red Riding Hood" as hopelessly tainted interventions by literate authors, ignore all early Western written evidence, and define the original tale on the basis of later non-Western material, then you lose a lot. If in examining "Little Red Riding Hood," you exclude European literary versions and reduce the tale to a set of narrative motifs that recur in tales throughout the world, then you lose even more. It may be that in 36 percent of the variants the name Red Riding Hood is lacking;¹²⁴ but if you take the Red Riding Hood out of "Little Red Riding Hood," what you have left is quite obvious: Little.

¹²¹ Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 59: here I coincide with Krohn's statements in his review of Wesselski.

¹²² Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 62.

¹²³ Von Sydow, "Folktale Studies," p. 241.

¹²⁴ Rumpf, *Rothkäppchen*, p. 67.

entrenched in folkloristics.³ Since its inception as an independent field of study, folklore studies have commonly been the battleground of two factions.⁴ One faction comprises literary folklorists, who have focused on folklore in — and through — literature. The other is composed of anthropological folklorists, who have been committed to studying folklore in its cultural context. Fortunately, the lines between the two factions have never been absolute, and prominent members of both have made reasonable proclamations about the need for cooperation; but the distinctions between the two show no signs of disappearing, and it seems that few literary or anthropological folklorists can forbear claiming primacy for their disciplines and materials in attaining a true understanding of folklore.

There is an irony in the fact that the doubts about the value of literary evidence in folkloristics received their fullest and most enduring articulation in the writings of the so-called Finnish School, practitioners of which “seek to reconstruct the history of a tale by tracing, collecting and categorizing all its variants,”⁵ for the most illustrious representative in America of the Finnish historical-geographical method in folktale analysis⁶ has been Stith Thompson, who received his graduate training from one of the foremost early literary folklorists and who himself advocated careful study of the mutual influence between written and oral tradition.⁷

Although to many people in this postmodern age the very project of reconstruction has become suspect, the reconstructive ambitions of the Finnish School trouble me far less than the prejudice against written evidence that it has sometimes encouraged: “all scholars admit some transmission by literature and some by oral variants, but different ones set the proportionate amounts of oral and literary influence at different levels. The Finnish School . . . give[s] the preponderant influence to oral tradition.”⁸ As a folklorist trained by Stith Thompson stated the case with specific reference to fairy tale, “The goal of the Finnish method of research is to discover the complete life-history of a *Märchen*. As a working hypothesis, its workers assume that

³ For a brief history with reference to the Brothers Grimm, see Rolf Hagen, “Perraults Märchen und die Brüder Grimm,” *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 74 (1955), 392–410 (here: pp. 392–93).

⁴ For a detailed account of the conflict between literary and anthropological folklorists in the United States, see Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt, *American Folklore Scholarship: A Dialogue of Dissent* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988). For a consideration of the divisions between literary and folklore studies with considerable attention to the Middle Ages, see Bruce A. Rosenberg, *Folklore and Literature: Rival Siblings* (Knoxville, 1991).

⁵ The quotation is drawn from Jack Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* (Austin, 1979), p. 21.

⁶ The classic exposition of the Finnish School's methods is Kaarle Krohn, *Folklore Methodology Formulated by Julius Krohn and Expanded by Nordic Researchers*, trans. Roger L. Welsch, Publications of the American Folklore Society: Bibliographical and Special Series 21 (Austin, 1971).

⁷ For a concise biography of his education and intellectual development, see Zumwalt, *American Folklore Scholarship*, pp. 55–60. For his advocacy of balance in attention to the written and the oral, see Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (1946; repr. Berkeley, 1977), p. 442.

⁸ Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 80 (where she contrasts the Finnish School and Carl Wilhelm von Sydow with Wesselski and Jan De Vries).

most motifs originally belonged to particular *Märchen* and then passed over into others. To find this *Urmärchen*, they study very many variants of the oral tale. They hold certain literary documents to be superfluous, such as those the oral sources of which are preserved and those which are copies, translations, or reworkings of older documents."⁹ As will be seen, in the hands of some scholars the first recordings of the oral sources are even permitted to postdate by centuries the literary documents to which they relate and which they eclipse.

The preference of the Finnish School for oral over literary has not won universal applause among folklorists in either the Old World or the New, but the dissent has taken the form of sporadic guerilla warfare by individual scholars rather than systematic opposition by a well-defined "school." In the first half of this century the most forceful objections emanated from Albert Wesselski, who challenged proponents of the Finnish method "to abandon their practice of examining oral variants of a not far distant past time and to find and examine old documents. He assert[ed] that many of their apparently successful studies would, under such a test, have resulted in failure."¹⁰ Wesselski remains an estimable figure, both for his energetic reconnoitering of medieval evidence and for his lucid framing of commonsensical objections to the Finnish method; but his quixotic quest was doomed, in part because it began at a time when the role of literary scholars in the field of folkloristics was dwindling. Now that ever fewer literary scholars define themselves as traditional philologists and ever more as literary critics or theoreticians, Wesselski's views are ever less likely to attract a responsive audience.

Since Wesselski, relatively few philologists have taken an interest in the squabble; and among the much more numerous literary historians and critics peace has been bought cheaply by begging the question. For example, Jack Zipes, the most prolific of Anglophone (or Anglograph!) literary critics to write on fairy tale, circumvents the controversy by differentiating between folktale as oral and fairy tale as literary. Three quotations illustrate his solution. First, whereas folktale "has its roots in the experience and fantasy of primitive peoples who cultivated the tale in an oral tradition," the literary fairy tale "has assumed a variety of distinct and unique forms since the late Middle Ages."¹¹ Second, "Just a superficial glance back into history will tell us that fairy tales have been in existence as *oral folk tales* for thousands of years and first became what we call *literary fairy tales* toward the end of the seventeenth century."¹² And third, "Clearly, fairy tale refers to the *literary* production of tales *adapted* by bourgeois or aristocratic writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries . . . and the nature of the author's social class, which must be studied in detail, added a new dimension to the folk tale as it was transformed into the fairy tale."¹³ Zipes's distinction between

⁹ Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 18.

¹⁰ Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 45.

¹¹ Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell*, p. ix.

¹² Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell*, p. 2.

¹³ Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell*, p. 23.

folktale and fairy tale condemns medieval texts to a limbo, since they are too early to qualify as literary fairy tales but too literary to pass as oral.

Is it productive for folklorists and literary scholars alike to develop rationales for disregarding each other's materials and findings, the one group because they deem the evidence superfluous, the other because they scorn it as being primitive? Despite being an old chestnut, the question of the relation between oral and written forms must remain alive, just as ever new formulas for a *modus vivendi* between the students of oral folklore and philology must be devised; for oral folklore and literary production are often interdependent, as are the scholars who have expertise in these two fields of study.¹⁴ To these issues we will return after wandering through the primeval — or, rather, *medieval* — forest in search of "Little Red Riding Hood" and the wolf.

The main early records for "Little Red Riding Hood" come in two literary versions. The first is "Le petit chaperon rouge" by Charles Perrault (1628–1703), published in 1697 under his son's name (P. D'Armancour, who was then only ten) in a book entitled *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* and subtitled *Contes de ma Mère l'Oye*; the second is "Rotkäppchen," published in 1812 by the Brothers Grimm in the first volume of the first edition of their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (KHM). Of less value to folklorists is Ludwig Tieck's (1773–1853) drama *Tragödie vom Leben und Tod des kleinen Rotkäppchens* (1800).

What weight should we attach to these works of literature as versions of "Little Red Riding Hood"? Alan Dundes leaves no room for doubt that he prefers oral over written versions. Indeed, in his foreword he criticizes even Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson for their failures to set proper priorities in this regard. According to him, they relied too heavily in their typing of the tale upon Perrault and Grimm without attending to "authentic oral versions of the tale which reveal important details not contained in either Perrault's or the Grimms' accounts."¹⁵ He adds, "One of the aims of the present casebook is to demonstrate the nature of the oral folktale from which the Perrault and Grimm versions of the story surely derive." In an essay later in the casebook Dundes solidifies his position: "It is well to keep in mind that fairy tales are first and foremost an *oral* form. So from that point of view, any written version is suspect."¹⁶ His avowed goal is "to illustrate the pitfalls of relying too heavily upon literary, derivative, and bowdlerized renderings of what are wrongly believed to be authentic folktales by considering the case of 'Little Red Riding Hood' (AT 333)."¹⁷

As these proclamations indicate, Dundes assumes a nearly automatic equivalence: oral versions of fairy tales are presumed to be authentic, written ones inauthentic. Does this sort of extremism lead to a greater understanding of

¹⁴ See Linda Dégh, "What Did the Grimm Brothers Give to and Take from the Folk," in James M. McGlathery, ed., *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale* (Urbana and Chicago, 1988), pp. 66–90 (here: p. 71), and Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, "Folktale Studies and Philology: Some Points of View," in Alan Dundes, *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965), pp. 219–42.

¹⁵ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. ix (my italics).

¹⁶ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 196.

¹⁷ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 197. The "AT" number is a reference to the Aarne-Thompson work cited below, n. 51.

"Little Red Riding Hood" — or of any other tale, for that matter? In the current state of scholarship no one would contend that any extant early literary version of "Little Red Riding Hood" represents an accurate transcription of an oral tale; no one would dispute Dundes's contention that Perrault's tale is a "highly stylized literary retelling";¹⁸ and no one would maintain any longer that the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* can be considered unadulterated folklore, as they once were. In the case of "Little Red Cap" ("Rotkäppchen"), the Brothers Grimm, far from being protoscientists of folklore, reworked a tale that they received from tellers who were anything but illiterate, culturally isolated German peasants. Their informants were Jeanette (Johanna Isabella) and Marie Hassenpflug, highly educated members of a Huguenot family who knew and used stories by Perrault. Jeanette (1791–1860) was twenty-one years old in the fall of 1812, when she provided Wilhelm with a version based on recollection of the Perrault tale. Her older sister Marie (1788–1856) gave them another version, this one believed to have been based on French oral tradition, which was published as a supplement to the first version in the first edition. Yet we can accept restrictions on the proximity of both Perrault and Grimm to oral tradition without needing to deny that both literary versions derive many characteristics from tales that had circulated for centuries before being written down: a folktale does not cease to be a folktale merely because it has been transferred and adapted from an oral to a written medium.¹⁹ In describing the relationship of these tales, we are not confined to a harsh dichotomy between literary and oral. As one early commentator on the German *Volksmärchen* summed up, "Das Verhältnis von Literatur und Volksmärchen ist kein einseitiges Abhängigkeitsverhältnis."²⁰ Since the invention of writing, there has been no hard and fast line between oral and written: folklore has filtered in and out of literature, literature in and out of folklore.²¹ Consequently, under many circumstances — and especially under circumstances that involve the multifarious transitional texts and cultures of the Middle Ages — literary historians must work with folklore, folklorists with literature.

¹⁸ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 3. Most would accept the view that the French writer adapted a preexistent tale that was current in French oral tradition, although some would contend that he fabricated "Little Red Riding Hood" entirely: Carole Hanks and D. T. Hanks, Jr., "Perrault's 'Little Red Riding Hood': Victim of the Revisers," *Children's Literature* 7 (1978), 68–77 (here: p. 77, n. 2).

¹⁹ If one accepts that the repertoire of stories among middle-class storytellers derived from centuries of lower-class storytellers, then the fact that the Grimms' informants were middle-class and literate becomes less problematic. See Heinz Rölleke, ed., *Kinder- und Hausmärchen: Ausgabe letzter Hand mit den Originalanmerkungen der Brüder Grimm*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1980), 3:602. This acceptance has been challenged by John Ellis, *One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales* (Chicago, 1983), pp. 107–8; defended by Donald Ward, "New Misconceptions about Old Folktales: The Brothers Grimm," in McGlathery, *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, pp. 91–100; and restated by Heinz Rölleke, "New Results of Research on Grimms' Fairy Tales," in McGlathery, *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, pp. 101–11 (here: p. 106).

²⁰ Lutz Mackensen, "Märchen," in Wilhelm Peßler, ed., *Handbuch der deutschen Volkskunde*, 2 (Potsdam, n.d.), p. 320. Compare Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 18: "They keep reminding themselves, too, that an oral tale may be a literary variant returned to the folk mouth."

²¹ See most recently Rosenberg, *Folklore and Literature: Rival Siblings*.

Before adopting any general policy, we must evaluate carefully the minutiae of the particular tale under examination.²² Because whatever versions we have at our disposal will have their special textures, the proof in any individual case will be in the pudding — or in the telling. As a matter of policy students of the folktale cannot afford the luxury of bigotry against chronologically far-removed written versions any more than against the records of geographically distant cultures. Just because the ethnographic standards of another time or place differ from our own, we do not need to reject every record produced by that time or place. Granted, we have no direct access to the storytellers of older times. This concession does not mean that we should discount what we do have that is written. Rather, it suggests that we should handle it with proper care.²³

A middle position that embraces the utility of older written evidence runs counter to the vintage Finnish-School method as it has been refined by Dundes: "In order to understand just how atypical both the Perrault and the Grimm versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood' really are, in comparison with the original folktale from which they surely derive, one needs to have two important sets of data. First, it is critical to have some idea of what the original oral tale was like. Second, one should be aware of the fact that a probable cognate of the tale is widely distributed in China, Japan, and Korea. It is sad to report that most of the scholars who have written at length about 'Little Red Riding Hood' were not in possession of these two crucial data sets. For the most part, the vital information was known to only a few specialists in folktale studies."²⁴

Dundes's procedure leads to a readily apparent circularity. As the first "set of data" Dundes urges us to consider what the original tale was like. But since he dismisses the versions in Perrault and Grimm as unreliable, and since he does not acknowledge the existence of written records for an earlier version, he has no choice but to reconstruct the original tale on the basis of two bodies of much later material. One corpus comprises late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century French versions, especially an 1885 version that folklorists tend somewhat anachronistically to revere as the ancestor of Perrault's seventeenth-century tale.²⁵ The other encompasses the non-European ma-

²² This was much the position taken by Walter Anderson: see Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, pp. 33 and 62.

²³ The approach recommended here differs little from that enunciated by Lawrence W. Levine, "How to Interpret American Folklore Historically," in Richard M. Dorson, ed., *Handbook of American Folklore* (Bloomington, 1983), pp. 338–44.

²⁴ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 13. Dundes looks like an adherent of the Finnish School in the early part of the century: "Anderson accuses Wesselski of not having exhausted even the well-known and now available Asiatic material, and of having completely ignored the oral transmission from Asia," in Kiefer, *Recent Folktale Theories*, p. 62.

²⁵ See Hanks and Hanks, "Perrault's 'Little Red Riding Hood,'" pp. 76–77, n. 2, where they voice a doubt that an oral text collected as recently as 1885 could possibly be considered the ancestor of Perrault's seventeenth-century tale. The 1885 version, recorded in Nièvre, is entitled "Conte de la mère grande," in Paul Delarue, *Le conte populaire français*, 1 (Paris, 1957), pp. 373–374.

terial to which he refers as his second "set of data" — material which is *both* chronologically and geographically distant from Perrault and Grimm.

After presenting abbreviated summaries of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean traditions, Dundes concludes that "it should be obvious that the Perrault literary reworking of AT 333 is far from being the most typical version of the tale type."²⁶ But if one's scope is European, and there is no reason not to have a Eurocentric scope in this case, since not even Dundes has argued that Perrault worked within a Chinese, Japanese, or Korean tradition, then perhaps the Perrault tale becomes more typical of "Little Red Riding Hood" as the average Westerner knows it. Indeed, if we opt not to exclude evidence from an older European context, we can find a piece of neglected evidence that helps clarify otherwise baffling aspects of Perrault and Grimm. In so doing we can follow, although not in the sense in which it was intended, the directive with which Dundes caps his introduction: "In future studies of this or other folktales, the reader may realize the importance of consulting all available versions of the tale rather than unnecessarily and arbitrarily limiting the scope of investigation to one or two standard literary versions no matter how important the intellectual niche such literary versions may occupy in Western civilization."²⁷ All available evidence should include, besides standard literary versions, not just oral versions but also nonstandard literary versions — literary versions that have been overlooked or accorded insufficient attention.

Since the Finnish School acquired ascendancy in folktale analysis early in this century, common wisdom has held that no traces of "Little Red Riding Hood" survive from before Perrault. In an authoritative study of Perrault that appeared in 1968, Marc Soriano asserted categorically: "Cette fois, aucune hésitation possible: le texte que nous étudions vient en droite ligne de la littérature orale. Il n'a jamais affleuré avant 1697 au niveau de la littérature écrite."²⁸ In a more recent appraisal of Perrault's sources, Jeanne Morgan betrays equal certainty on this score: "*Le Petit Chaperon rouge* has no known sources or parallels whatsoever. We have only Perrault's word for it that they are indeed 'Contes du temps passé,' in the Preface's allusion to stories 'que nos aïeux ont inventés.'"²⁹ The complete gap in early literary evidence is all the more surprising in view of the widespread conviction that the number of independent oral folktales with the main elements of "Little Red Riding Hood" attests to a thriving oral tradition in France, probably long before Perrault's version.³⁰

In spite of the common wisdom, there is a parallel that was known to philologists more than a hundred years ago, that was even dubbed "Roth-

²⁶ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 202.

²⁷ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. xi.

²⁸ Marc Soriano, *Les contes de Perrault: Culture savante et traditions populaires* (Paris, 1968), p. 148.

²⁹ Jeanne Morgan, *Perrault's Morals for Moderns*, American University Series II, Romance Languages and Literatures 28 (New York, 1985), p. 103.

³⁰ Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, p. 3; Jack Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: Versions of the Tale in Sociocultural Context* (South Hadley, Mass., 1983), p. 6.

käppchen und die jungen Wölfe" by its first and only editor,³¹ and that was quoted in toto in the authoritative source study of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* that was published in 1913.³² But the extent of its relevance was never fully appreciated. Whether or not all readers will concur that these few Latin verses are even remotely akin to the later versions that were foundational in written literature, probably most will be astonished that they have not received even passing mention or bibliographic citation in any English-language scholarship on "Little Red Riding Hood" over the past half century.³³

The Latin verses appear within an extensive poem entitled *Fecunda ratis* (*The Richly Laden Ship*). This verse schoolbook was created between 1022 and 1024 by Egbert of Liège. A teacher of the trivium at the cathedral school of Liège, Egbert composed the *Fecunda ratis* for his pupils, dividing its 2,373 unrhymed hexameter verses into two books, which in a paroxysm of schoolmasterly inspiration he entitled the *Prora* (*Prow* or *Bow*) and the *Puppis* (*Poopdeck* or *Afterdeck*). Just as all of creation was loaded two by two onto Noah's ark, so the fundamental elements of learning were supposedly conveyed in the intellectual microcosm of the *Fecunda ratis*.

The *Prora* encompasses five sections: a prologue (1.1–4), one concatenation of one-line proverbs and sententiae (1.5–596), another of two-line proverbs and sententiae (1.597–1004), an epilogue (1.1005–8), and a medley (added in a second redaction) of longer pieces of fable, satire, and admonition (1.1009–1768). Whereas the *Prora* has a pedagogic bias, the *Puppis* is largely catechistic, with the accent on moral instruction (2.1–605). Although the *Fecunda ratis* is extant in only one manuscript (Cologne, Erzbischöfliche Diözesanbibliothek, Dombibliothek codex 196, eleventh century, fols. 1r–63r), the sorts of glosses with which it was outfitted by two of the twelve scribes who participated in its production presuppose that it was employed in schooling.³⁴ Egbert probably envisaged it as an early-eleventh-century competitor for two of the standard primers in the basic school syllabus, namely, the *Distichs* of Cato and the fables of Romulus or Avian.³⁵

The *Fecunda ratis* has been called "a treasure trove for students of medieval folklore";³⁶ for although Egbert drew extensively upon the Bible and patristic writings, he also relied heavily on the rich oral traditions that circulated in his region, a border zone between Germanic and Romance language and

³¹ Egbert of Liège, *Fecunda ratis*, ed. Ernst Voigt (Halle a.S., 1889), p. 268.

³² Johannes Bolte and Georg Polívka, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*, 5 vols. (Leipzig, 1913–32), 1:236 and 4:128.

³³ Even in French scholarship the Latin poem has not received notice since Paul Delarue, "Les contes merveilleux de Perrault et la tradition populaire: I. Le petit chaperon rouge," *Bulletin folklorique d'Ile-de-France* (1951), pp. 221–28, 251–60, 283–91, and (1953), pp. 511–17 (here: p. 227).

³⁴ The glosses are not all authorial: *Fecunda ratis*, ed. Voigt, pp. vii–viii.

³⁵ On these three works and the school syllabus, see Günter Glauche, *Schullektüre im Mittelalter: Entstehung und Wandlungen des Lektürekansons bis 1200 nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance-Forschung 5 (Munich, 1970).

³⁶ Elaine Golden Robison, "Egbert of Liège," in Joseph R. Strayer, ed., *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 4 (New York, 1984), p. 399.

Worcester Police: Amador Medina paid another man to steal skeletons

By Scott J. Croteau | scroteau@masslive.com | Follow on Twitter on December 07, 2015 at 12:59 PM, updated December 07, 2015 at 3:55 PM

masslive.com

WORCESTER - The man accused of possessing five skeletons stolen from a Hope Cemetery mausoleum told Hartford Police detectives he paid another man to get human remains for him, statements on file in a Worcester court said.

Amador Medina, 32, of 245 Preston St., Apt. 2, Hartford, was arraigned in a Connecticut court Monday on a fugitive from justice charge after he was arrested in connection to the thefts. He faces five charges of disinterment of a body in Worcester Central District Court.

Authorities told the Hartford Courant that Medina wanted to use the skeletons to practice his religion, Santeria. Medina was arrested Friday by Hartford Police after the skeletal remains stolen from Worcester were found at his apartment, authorities said.

This booking photograph released Monday, Dec. 7, 2015, by the Hartford, Conn., Police Department shows Amador Medina, arrested Friday on fugitive from justice charges, and suspected of stealing skeletal remains from a Worcester, Mass., cemetery. Medina is scheduled to be arraigned Monday in Hartford. Police said they recovered the remains of five bodies after going to his Hartford home on Friday. (Hartford Police Department via AP)

Police executed a search warrant at the apartment and recovered the five skeletons.

"Subsequently Mr. Medina provided a statement to Hartford Police Detectives and indicated he directed an unidentified individual to secure a human body (remains) for Mr. Medina for an agreed upon payment," Worcester Police Sgt. Gary Quitadamo wrote in a police statement. "This individual subsequently broke into a locked mausoleum in Hope Cemetery and removed five skeletal remains."

Medina, the investigator wrote, then paid the man and took the five skeletons. The name of this second person is not listed in court records.

The Hartford Courant reported that Medina waived extradition hearings during his court appearance in Connecticut. Bail in the case was set at \$300,000 and he was given a Dec. 31 court date in Connecticut, the newspaper reported.

Worcester Police were ready to take Medina back to Massachusetts.

The break-in at the Houghton-family mausoleum was discovered on Oct. 9, but court records show investigators believe the theft occurred months earlier. The complaint filed in court shows a May 15 date for time of offense.

In his court statement, Sgt. Quitadamo wrote that six burial crypts containing caskets were damaged inside the mausoleum. The remains of three adults and two children were taken.

Medina allegedly admitted to using the remains to practice Santeria, a religion that contains some aspects of Catholicism and West African religions. Medina's Facebook page lists that he studied at the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico.

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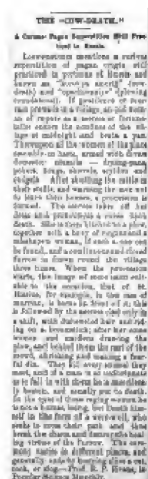
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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

A Semi-Clothed Fortune Teller, Virgins, & An Available Misshapen Woman Combat Werewolves and Pestilence



“THE ‘COW-DEATH.’

A Curious Pagan Superstition Still Practiced in Russia.

Loewenstimm mentions a curious superstition of pagan origin still practiced in portions of Russia and known as ‘korovya smertj’ (cow-death) and ‘opachivaniye’ (plowing roundabout). If pestilence or murrain prevails in a village, an old woman of repute as a seeress or fortune-teller enters the confines of the village at midnight and beats a pan. Thereupon all the women of the place assemble in haste, armed with divers(e) domestic utensils-frying pans, pokers, tongs, shovels, scythes, and cudgels. After shutting the cattle in their stalls, and warning the men not to leave their houses, a procession is formed. The seeress takes off her dress and pronounces a curse upon death. She is then hitched to a plow, together with a bevy of virgins and a misshapen woman, if such a one can be found, and continuous and closed furrow is drawn round the village three times. When the procession starts, the image of some saint suitable to the occasion, that of St. Blasius, for example, in the case of murrian, is borne in front of it; this is followed by the seeress clad only in a shift, with disheveled hair and riding on a broomstick; after her come women and maidens drawing the plow, and behind them the rest of the crowd, shrieking and making a fearful din. They kill every animal they meet, and if a man is so unfortunate as to fall in with them he is mercilessly beaten, and usually put to death. In the eyes of these raging women he is not a human being, but Death himself in the form of a were-wolf, who seeks to cross their path and thus break the charm and destroy the healing virtue of the furrow. The ceremony varies in different places, and generally ends by burying alive a cat, cock, or dog. -Prof. E.P. Evans, in *Popular Science Monthly*.”

When I read that the women wielded kitchen items, I thought to myself, “That sounds

familiar.”

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Ancient mastodon dung helps scientists discover early humans helped save Thanksgiving dinner

wtkr.com

Posted 4:21 pm, November 24, 2015, by CNN Wire

As you prepare your traditional Thanksgiving feast, you may want to swap out those pilgrim salt-and-pepper shakers with a mastodon and a caveman instead. We owe a lot to this ancient duo. Without them your mom couldn't bake your favorite pumpkin pie. Gone would be your sister-in-law Celia's delicious squash casserole. And your Pinterest-ready cornucopia would be dreary.

Believe it or not, it's not your grandmother nor is it Martha Stewart who had the most influence on this part of your traditional celebration. It's your great, great, great-to-the-ten-thousandth grandmother who we should thank for saving the squashes of today from going the way of the mastodon and giant sloth. That's according to a new study running in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The authors came to this conclusion after studying something decidedly unappetizing: seeds preserved in ancient animal dung. Yes, what we know about these Thanksgiving favorites came from a probe of petrified poo. Please, impress your Auntie Mary with this Turkey Day tidbit only after she's finished with the pie course.

Study authors ran genetic tests on ancient seeds for 91 plants of the Cucurbita genus — the fancy Latin name for your squashes, pumpkins and gourds. The really wild version of these baseball-sized plants were a bit like your great Uncle Bill after a few holiday martinis.

"They were small, tough and bitter," author Logan Kistler said.

Lindsay Wyatt, a plant breeder who did not work on the study, but who grew some of these ancient gourds a few years ago, said they were definitely not fit for your holiday menu (unless you didn't really like your guests?).

"I had to smash them open with a cinder block to get the seeds out, you could crush them pretty easily but they were not knife friendly," Wyatt said. "They were also so bitter that even after I washed my hands after handling them, when I'd eat my lunch later in the day it made the lunch taste funny."

Bitter and hard was not a problem for the megafauna of the era, according to the study. The mastodons and giant sloths were strong enough to get through the tough skin. The authors say the large animals had fewer copies of the bitter tasting gene, meaning to them it wasn't toxic as it was for smaller animals. These large animals actually encouraged wild gourds to grow, grazing so much there was room for these plants. Unable to digest the seeds, the animals would spread the seeds around as they traveled and essentially pooped in different places.

As these animals started to disappear, these wild gourds did, too. What saved the gourd then from extinction were ancient farmers. Our ancestors didn't mind the tough skin, as gourds could be used to carry liquid in those pre-pottery days. Fisherman also used them to keep their nets afloat. But they had to do something about the taste. So farmers must have cultivated the gourds that weren't as bitter.

The growing tradition carries on today. "What we grow changes with personal taste and fads and viability, this is not a static discipline; this is a constant evolutionary process with plants," Kistler said.

Wyatt, who works for Johnny's Selected Seeds in Winslow, Maine, said even in the last few years market appetite has shaped the variety of gourds.

"I think this is in part because of the Pinterest side of things," Wyatt said, meaning people want to take pictures of a wider variety of seasonal gourds. "But also with the growing interest in locally grown fruit

and vegetables, there is a much wider appreciation of culinary quality these days.”

Her company does what our ancestors did, although the gourds our ancestors grew would likely taste different from the ones Americans like today. Growing fruits and vegetables “is a continual process of improvement,” she said. And tastes vary. Americans like sweeter gourds. Some Asian cultures prefer more neutral tasting gourds with a heavier starch quality that holds up well in cooking.

Daniel Sandweiss, a professor of anthropology and climate studies at the University of Maine, said he appreciated this PNAS study as a reminder of the impact even a tiny population like these ancient ancestors could have on what’s on our table thousands of years later.

“Humans have such a large and sometimes unexpected influence on economies and ecosystems,” Sandweiss said. “The squash we have today are remaining representatives of this genus of plant which otherwise would have been in trouble for survival because of the changing landscape.”

“It’s fascinating to think what impact human intervention can have even through the depth of time,” Sandweiss said.

Climate change, a new technology, your decision to try a different pumpkin pie recipe — all of these factors could change food tradition for thousands of years to come. If that’s too much pressure to think about this holiday, maybe you should consider another current Thanksgiving tradition that has evolved over thousands of years of heavy meals — a nice, long after-dinner nap.

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Anti-vax mom changes her tune as all 7 of her children come down with whooping cough

By Lenny Bernstein and Rebecca Schatz
April 14

washingtonpost.com



Canadian mom changes anti-vax stance

In the ongoing skirmishes between public health officials and vaccine skeptics, I'm scoring this one for the pro-immunization forces. A Canadian woman who had declined to have her children immunized against pertussis,

better known as whooping cough, has changed her position *now that all seven of her children have come down with the disease.*

Yes, Tara Hills was stuck in isolation at her Ottawa home for more than a week with her sick children and her regrets about refusing to vaccinate them against the highly contagious respiratory disease. Whooping cough, a bacterial infection, causes violent, uncontrollable coughing and is best known for the telltale sound victims make as they try to draw breath. Occasionally, it can be fatal, especially in infants less than a year old, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Hills kids completed a course of antibiotics and were released from isolation Tuesday.

"I set out to prove that we were right," Hills said in an interview with the Washington Post, "and in the process found out how wrong we were."

Vaccination rates in Canada, like those in United States, have waned in some communities, mostly as a result of increased skepticism about the dangers of immunization that have spread on the Internet despite overwhelming scientific evidence that vaccines are safe and effective. A debunked 1998 study linked the measles vaccine to autism. Both Canada and the U.S. have suffered large outbreaks of whooping cough and measles in recent years.

[Everything you need to know about the measles]

In an April 8 post she wrote for the blog TheScientificParent.org, Hills offered many of the most common reasons for skepticism about vaccines. She and her husband had partially immunized their first three children, but decided against any vaccines for the next four.

"We stopped because we were scared and didn't know who to trust," she wrote. "Was the medical community just paid off puppets of a Big Pharma-Government-Media conspiracy?"

Were these vaccines even necessary in this day and age? Were we unwittingly doing greater harm than help to our beloved children? So much smoke must mean a fire, so we defaulted to the 'do nothing and hope nothing bad happens' position."

But when a small measles outbreak hit nearby, Hills was terrified. "I looked again at the science and evidence for community immunity and found myself gripped with a very real sense of personal and social responsibility before God and man. The time had come to make a more fully informed decision than we did 6 years ago. I sat down with our family doctor and we put together a catch-up vaccination schedule for our children," she wrote.

[Whooping cough sweeps through California]

But before that could happen, all her children came down with whooping cough. A vaccine for the disease has existed in Canada for 70 years.

"Right now my family is living the consequences of misinformation and fear," Hills wrote. "I understand that families in our community may be mad at us for putting their kids at risk. I want them to know that we tried our best to protect our kids when we were afraid of vaccination and we are doing our best now, for everyone's sake, by getting them up to date."

The only silver lining about learning the hard way is the knowledge that minds can be changed on this subject, she said.

"People like me who were hesitant, who were confused, who froze, we can be reached if people use the right approach," she told the Post.

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Argentina's forensic anthropology is finding 'disappeared ones'

[irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)

By Dana MacLean



Photo: Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team Sifting through remains in search of people who went missing during military repression in Argentina's "Dirty War"

- A fatal human rights violation
- Fear of reporting disappearances
- Information is critical for identification
- Hope for closure

BUENOS AIRES, 5 February 2014 (IRIN) - In the decades since a brutal military crackdown in Argentina in the late 1970s, when thousands of disappearances occurred, the country has been driven by activist pressure to become a global leader in forensic anthropology, a field that holds lessons for other post-conflict countries trying to identify missing people, say experts.

"The trauma of disappearance is universal - not to know if your loved one is alive or dead, not to have a grave - that grief is universal for families

everywhere," said Luis Fondebrinder, a forensic anthropologist with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF), an NGO based in Buenos Aires, the capital, that investigates large-scale disappearances.

Forensic anthropology - combining the sciences of archaeology and human biology to identify human remains in criminal investigations - has been used in Argentina to locate mass burial sites in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Tucuman, and Cordoba.

At the urging of human rights groups, Argentina was the first country to employ the technique on a large scale to investigate human rights abuses under a military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983, in what became known as the "Dirty War". Scientists have so far exhumed and identified around 600 of thousands of skeletons, using DNA samples provided by the families of missing persons.

"Enforced disappearances are a denial of the person who disappeared... it is a human rights violation that affects not only the rights of the person who disappeared, but also the rights of their relatives," Ariel Dulitzky, the chair of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) in the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) told IRIN. The UN has stressed the importance of forensic anthropology in helping citizens fight such disappearances.

Worldwide, nearly 54,000 unsolved cases have been submitted to the WGEID since its inception in 1980, according to the International Coalition Against Enforced Disappearances (ICAED), a global network of 50 NGOs that researches incidents and works to raise awareness of this crime.

Human rights groups say many cases go unreported because families feel that "if investigated... the information might be used against them, and that the same disappearance might happen to any [other] member of the family," said Candy Diez, a research and documentation officer with the Asia Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD), a network of more than 10 human rights groups based in the capital of the Philippines, Manila. The organization says there are at least 7,400 unsolved disappearances in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Nepal, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Thailand and Bangladesh.

"Silence and fear shroud enforced disappearances. In several cases, individuals who reported a disappearance were themselves detained," said a 2013 paper on Syria by the UN OHCHR, noting that the missing include doctors suspected of treating anti-government protesters.

A story only bones can tell

Exhuming and identifying the dead can take anywhere from weeks to years, depending on a government's willingness to cooperate, the type of records kept by alleged perpetrators, the geographic location of bodies, and obtaining DNA samples - as well as the laboratory capacity to analyze them - according to WGEID and the Argentine EAAF.



Photo: Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team Inside EAAF's laboratory

Scientists then construct a biological profile based on the remains, which are often skeletal, using bone size and shape to estimate a person's age, sex, and stature.

The organizations use government files to identify the mass graves closest to where a person was last seen, and archaeological techniques to analyze the soil to detect past activity at suspected burial sites, before locating and digging up remains.

Information from surviving family members is key. "You need circumstantial information, how the person disappeared, and also physical and biological information, including any bone fractures, how were the teeth, etc.," said Fondebrinder, who added that many diseases can alter bones.

The story of a person's life helps to find them in death, say forensic anthropologists. "Science is not one hundred percent, usually we say it is the person 'beyond reasonable doubt'," Fondebrinder said. "Only with DNA [can we know the percentage of accuracy of our identification efforts]. Usually you say, 'Yes, it is identified, or no [it is not]'."

The bones can also tell how the person died, according to EAAF. The Simon Fraser University (SFU) Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology based in Vancouver, Canada, notes that if the person was hit with a blunt object, the skull could shatter or bones might fracture; sharp objects often make puncture marks, and a gunshot or knife wound can cause deep trauma in a small area.

The challenges of finding remains

Finding bones is not always straightforward, especially in cases where the alleged perpetrators have destroyed bodies or buried them in mass graves to cover up human rights violations, said EAAF, which searches for people on the official Argentine government list of some 10,000 registered as missing, but has only identified 600.

The UN WGEID reports resolving around 10,000 disappearances worldwide since it was founded in 1980, with 45,000 cases remaining open to date. "Sometimes you can only find small pieces of bones, or else there are hundreds or thousands of remains all mixed up," said Dulitzky.

The Working Group's progress in resolving disappearances often depends on government cooperation, as forensic anthropology is a legal investigation that requires official consent. Without state cooperation, it can be next to impossible to find a missing person.

"Even where courts are willing and make findings against the police, [the] army or others, there is no effective remedy when the authorities refuse to cooperate," said Brad Adams, in the Asia Division of Human Rights Watch.

While 93 of the 193 UN member countries have signed the International Convention for the Protection of

All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the UN lists only 42 that have passed national legislation to implement it.

Closing the circle of grief

Knowing what happened is fundamental if families are to have closure, said many forensic anthropologists IRIN interviewed in Argentina, who had often entered the profession because their parents had lost loved ones during the period of military rule.

"Many relatives, even if they know they will not be able to find the body, they want to know how the person was killed, when, and by whom," said Dulitzky.

In Argentina, the trials of alleged perpetrators were broadcast. The government also made a public apology to the families of those who had disappeared, and paid reparations of US\$200,000 per family. "[It] is one of the countries in the world that has achieved much in terms of finding the truth, seeking justice, and [recording the] memory [of the collective trauma]," said Fondebrinder.

But with only 6 percent of all officially recorded disappearances in Argentina solved, most of the families are still waiting for scientists to examine and identify the thousands of bone fragments stored in the EAAF laboratory.

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Art Bell No Longer Broadcasting; Retires Under Duress - Dread Centraldreadcentral.com

Posted on December 11, 2015by Steve Barton

For the last several weeks 70-year-old radio legend Art Bell has been shot at, twice, by some crazy person who's bound and determined to force Bell to stop doing his show. The last incident was just a few days ago; Bell was on his way to his studio when shots rang out. Bell was forced to lie in the dirt on his belly until the police showed up.

For several nights over the last few weeks, his frightened family members have been forced to sleep on the floor instead of in their beds as a means to ensure their safety, which is nothing short of horrible. Bell issued the following statement over on his website, **ArtBell.com**:

"I am sorry to have to announce this but I will not be on Tonight or any other night, yes I am going to hang it up. Whoever this crazy person is, they are not stopping and it has come to the point that we as a Family do not feel it is worth the risk. While I think the person or persons are after me, my Wife and now my Daughter are really scared, the other night after the latest incident my Daughter was off in the corner of her bed scared to death as the Police cars came screaming up. I will not put my Family through this. As you all know I dearly love what I do but not at the expense of never ending Terrorism. I want to thank those of you who have shown so much support and it has been my joy, short as it has been to have cracked that Mic open for a last time. This was a Family decision. The girls stuck with me and still would but if one of them were harmed because of what I love doing my life would be over."

This is news that is as awful as it is sad. To think we live in a world in which a 70-year-old man who is just simply doing what he loves and now has been prevented from doing so by some crazy asshole is sickening. We do not blame Art at all; family and safety must come first. We wish Bell well and hope that maybe... just maybe... this can be resolved and we will once again... *take the ride....*

As for the crazy asshole... Do your little victory dance... just know that karma is a bitch. A scathing, merciless, fire and brimstone bitch, and when she catches up with you... well... it will be a wonderful day.



Art Bell

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Astronomers Skeptical about "Planet X" Claims

scientificamerican.com

Two controversial new studies suggest the discovery of large objects at the outer reaches of the solar system

- By Lee Billings on December 10, 2015



For decades astronomers have searched for a possible "Planet X" in the far outer reaches of our solar system, speculating that something big and dark may be lurking out there, its gravitational influence occasionally stirring up trouble in the orbits of the objects that we do see. There are major incentives to look: When astronomers sought a Planet X beyond Uranus in 1846, they discovered Neptune; when they looked for one beyond Neptune

in 1930, they found Pluto. Since then, the search for a Planet X beyond Pluto has almost been too successful—astronomers have found so many new and Plutolike "trans-Neptunian objects" (TNOs) that it became more sensible to demote Pluto from planethood rather than swell the solar system's planetary population into the hundreds. After all, even the largest of the newfound TNOs were just about Pluto's size—astronomers knew of nothing out there worthy of the "Planet X" name.

That is, perhaps, until now. On December 8 researchers from Sweden and Mexico quietly submitted two papers to the prestigious journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, announcing their discovery of not one but two possible Planet X candidates. The quiet did not last for long. Even though neither paper has yet been accepted for peer-review and publication, the researchers uploaded both to the arXiv, a public online repository for preprint papers, where they appeared last night. Today, as claims of newfound planets in our solar system reverberate around the world in news stories and blog posts, other astronomers are reviewing the papers and reacting mostly with skepticism. The ensuing discussions between experts in public forums like Twitter and Facebook offer a rare, real-time glimpse of the sometimes messy scientific process as it unfolds.

"Normally I prefer to only upload accepted papers," says Wouter Vlemmings, an astronomer at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden and co-author on both studies. "This time, however, we had exhausted our ideas. ... With the arXiv upload we specifically wanted to reach the community that could tell us if we overlooked something, in which case we fully intend to withdraw the papers.... What I personally did not count on was the impact it has had outside the astronomy community."

One of the candidates, nicknamed "Gna" (after a fast-moving "Nordic messenger goddess," Vlemmings says) showed up in the sky next to the star W Aquilae whereas the other, as-yet-unnamed, appeared adjacent to our nearest neighboring star system Alpha Centauri. Astronomers detected both objects using the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA), a massive group of radio dishes perched in the high desert of the Chilean Andes,

and thought at first that the bodies were faint glows from far-distant background galaxies. But in separate pairs of snapshots taken over a period of months, both objects seemed to move swiftly against the "fixed" background stars, suggesting a relatively close cosmic proximity to our solar system. Considerable uncertainty exists about the properties of both objects because each was observed only twice, and bodies with a wide range of sizes, compositions and distances from us could explain the measured brightness.

Gna, the researchers say, is quite likely to be something like a 200-kilometer-wide asteroid floating between Saturn and Uranus, but it could also be a free-floating Neptune-size planet drifting a hundred times farther out or a failed star—a Jupiter-size brown dwarf—passing by in nearby interstellar space. Similarly, the object seen in the direction of Alpha Centauri could conceivably be a nearby brown dwarf, a super-Earth midway in size between our planet and Neptune some six times farther out than Pluto or an impressively-sized hunk of ice much, much closer in.

Alternatively, both objects could be illusory, random blips of noise echoing through the world's most complex and ambitious array of radio telescopes. According to Scott Sheppard, a planetary scientist at the Carnegie Institution for Science involved with surveys of the outer solar system, the fact that only two observations apiece underpin both discovery claims makes them hard to swallow. "Anything could create two random detections, and you can always fit a straight line through any two points," Sheppard says. Demonstrating that either object was real, he says, would likely require a third detection, one that shows the object's clear, linear movement at a consistent speed.

What these objects are, and whether they exist at all, are open questions. What is certain, however, is that earlier searches have placed limits on the possibilities for any Planet X. An all-sky search by NASA's Wide-field Infrared Survey Explorer space telescope previously found no signs of any additional planets in our solar system, ruling out anything Jupiter-size within about three trillion kilometers of the sun, and anything Saturn-size within half that distance. Something smaller and dimmer like a super-Earth could still lurk out there, unseen, but to find it with such easy serendipity in routine ALMA measurements seems statistically unlikely, astronomers say.

Mike Brown, a prominent California Institute of Technology astronomer and self-described "Pluto killer" who discovered several large TNOs that dethroned the former planet, unleashed another statistical argument against the claimed new planets on Twitter. "If it is true that ALMA accidentally discovered a massive outer solar system object in its tiny, tiny, tiny, field of view," Brown tweeted, "that would suggest that there are something like 200,000 Earth-sized planets in the outer solar system. Which, um, no."

"Even better," he added later, "I just realized that this many Earth-sized planets existing would destabilize the entire solar system and we would all die." That said, Brown notes, "the idea that there might be large planets lurking in the outer solar system is perfectly plausible."

Many of the most cutting reactions came from astronomers discussing the results on a public Facebook group devoted to imaging exoplanets—that is, planets around other stars. (Update: the group has since been made private.) After tweeting that the two papers "will launch 1,000

undoubtedly wrong blogs and news releases," University of Rochester astronomer Eric Mamajek detailed what he believes to be serious inconsistencies in the measurements of motion and brightness for both objects. "'Gna' presumably stands for 'Goofy Non-Asteroid,'" Mamajek quipped, before suggesting that the objects could perhaps be activity in faraway galaxies, simply misconstrued as being much closer to Earth. "Please pass whatever they are smoking in Onsala," he added.

In the same group, astronomer Bruce Macintosh at Stanford University noted the "astonishing coincidence" that the first two trans-Neptunian objects discovered by ALMA would be found right next to bright stars. More likely, Macintosh guessed, is that the putative objects are actually "some residual artifact"—mirages produced in the data by quirks in ALMA's complex calibration methods.

Vlemmings insists that he and his colleagues have already carefully checked these and several other scenarios, but to no avail. Whatever they are, the objects simply seemed to be too bright and pointlike to be explained away as far-off galaxies, and their proximity to bright stars, he says, actually helped the data calibration and reduced the likelihood of observational errors. "Still, we are certainly open to such options and have several times sent out queries to ALMA colleagues [asking] if they could conceive of how such point sources could be artificially created," Vlemmings says. "None have yet said they think it could be done." The trial of these claims in the court of public opinion has not come without its perks, Vlemmings adds. Although the sudden publicity was unwanted, "the most helpful feedback so far has been numerous offers to observe with other instruments." With a little help from the rest of the astronomy community, evidence for—or against—the next Planet X may not be so far-off after all.

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With his enormous range of scholarly pursuits the 17th century polymath Athanasius Kircher has been hailed as the last Renaissance man and “the master of hundred arts”. John Glassie looks at one of Kircher’s great masterworks *Mundus Subterraneus* and how it was inspired by a subterranean adventure Kircher himself made into the bowl of Vesuvius.



Portrait of Kircher at age 53 from
Mundus Subterraneus (1664).

Just before Robert Hooke’s rightly famous microscopic observations of everything from the “Edges of Rasors” to “Vine mites” appeared in *Micrographia* in 1665, the insatiably curious and incredibly prolific Jesuit scholar Athanasius Kircher published what is in many ways a more spectacular work. *Mundus Subterraneus* (Underground World), a two-volume tome of atlas-like dimensions, was intended to lay out “before the eyes of the curious reader all that is rare, exotic, and portentous contained in the fecund womb of Nature.” There is an “idea of the earthly sphere that exists in the divine mind,” Kircher proclaimed, and in this book, one of more than thirty on almost as many subjects that he published during his lifetime, he tried to prove that he had grasped it.

As a French writer put it some years later, “it would take a whole journal to indicate everything remarkable in this work.” There were extended treatments on the spontaneous generation of living animals from non-living matter, the unethical means by which alchemists pretended to change base metals into gold, and the apparent tricks of nature we now recognize as fossils. The book included detailed charts of “secret” oceanic motions, or currents, among the first ever published. The author’s more or less correct explanation of how igneous rock is formed was also arguably the first in print. According to one modern scholar, Kircher “understood erosion,” and his entries “on the quality and use of sand” and his “investigations into the tending of fields” had their practical use.

Mundus Subterraneus identified the location of the legendary lost island of Atlantis (something that modern science hasn’t been able to accomplish) as well as the source of the Nile: it started in the “Mountains of the Moon,” then ran northward through “Guix,” “Sorgola,” and “Alata” and on into “Bagamidi” before reaching Ethiopia and Egypt. Kircher offered a lengthy discussion of people who lived in caves (their societies and their economy). He reported on the remains of giants (also mainly cave dwellers) found in the ground. And he went into detail on the kinds of lower animals who belong to the lower world (including dragons).

In short, *Mundus Subterraneus* covered almost every subject that might relate to the realm of earth, as well as many that wouldn’t seem to, such as the sun and “its special properties, by which it flows into the earthly world” and the “nature of the lunar body and its effects.” These



Depiction of a Giant featured in *Mundus Subterraneus*.



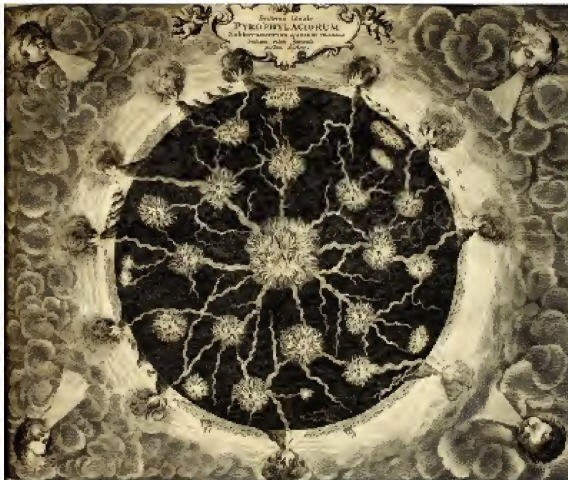
Depiction of a Dragon featured in *Mundus Subterraneus*.

correspondences and influences were nothing new, though perhaps only the always-inclusive Athanasius Kircher would choose to publish a series of moon maps in a book about the world below.

All these other subjects notwithstanding, it was Kircher's theory about the interior of the earth that captured, or at least deserved, the most attention. As he explained, "the whole Earth is not solid but everywhere gaping, and hollowed with empty rooms and spaces, and hidden burrows." Deep down, it holds many great oceans and fires, interconnected by a system of passageways that reached all the way to its core. In his view, volcanoes, however awful and awe-inspiring, "are nothing but the vent-holes, or breath-pipes of Nature," and earthquakes are merely the "proper effects of subterrestrial combustions" that are sure to go on constantly. The "prodigious volcanoes and fire-vomiting mountains visible in the external surface of the earth do sufficiently demonstrate it to be full of invisible and underground fires," he wrote. "For wherever there is a volcano, there also is a conservatory or storehouse of fire under it.... And these fires argue for deeper treasures and storehouses of fire, in the very heart and inward bowels of the Earth."

According to Kircher, "the fire and water sweetly conspire together in mutual service." The tides, caused by the nitrous effluvia of the moon, push "an immense bulk of water" through "hidden and occult passages at the bottom of the Ocean" and thrust it "forcibly into the intimate bowels of the Earth." The resulting winds "excite and stir up" and otherwise feed the subterranean fire like a huge bellows. The seas, which would stagnate and freeze without the fires, keep the fires from getting out of hand, preventing "unlimited eruptions," which would "soon turn all to ruins." The "secret make-up of the mountains" is that they are hollow and serve as reservoirs. Hot baths, hot springs, and fountains are produced where underground water passageways come near or interconnect with the fire channels.

More than once, Kircher compares the movement of the earth's water to the circulation of the blood in the body as described by William Harvey. The water of the oceans follows its "secret motions" up and around the globe toward the North Pole. Somewhere off the coast of Norway (the actual site of a major whirlpool system called the *Moskenstraumen*), he declared, is a giant maelstrom through which the water enters the earth — as if passing through a great drain — and runs through it, cooling it down, providing it with nutriment in particulate form



Kircher's diagram showing the interconnectedness of fire inside the earth, featured in *Mundus Subterraneus*.



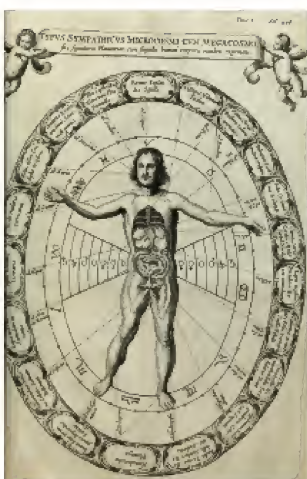
Kircher's diagram showing the interconnectedness of water inside the earth, featured in *Mundus Subterraneus*.

before
being

eliminated through a nether opening at the South Pole. Sometimes the analogies referred more to the continuing process of the digestive system than the cycling of blood, but no matter: "You see therefore the manner and way of the Circulation of Nature."

Kircher didn't just (or didn't entirely) make up his ideas about the interior of the earth. He'd first "learned the great secrets of Nature," as he put it, almost thirty before, under circumstances of "great danger."

Kircher was about thirty five years old, and had been based at the flagship Jesuit college in Rome for about three of four years — attempting to decipher the hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians — when in 1637 he was assigned to accompany a young German prince on an extended visit to Malta. If he was initially upset about being dragged away with an immature prince to some rocks in the middle of the Mediterranean, his curiosity quickly kicked in. He made magnetic and astronomical readings, and studied geological formations. There were four-hundred-foot cliffs, natural arches, and a place where the tides had carved human-looking shapes into the earth. He explored Malta's megalithic temples, catacombs, and grottoes, and was especially fascinated by its inland seas and underground passageways: how far down did they go?



After about a year, Kircher was finally allowed to return to Rome, but he took his time getting there and lingered in Sicily for a long while. "I found such a Theater of Nature, displaying herself in such a wonderful variety of things, as I had with so many desires wished for," he wrote later. "Whatever thing occurs in the whole body of the Earth that is wonderful, rare, unusual, and worthy of admiration, I found contracted here."

He was especially intent on exploring Sicily's outcroppings, cliffs, and volcanoes. And he wanted to look into stories about a type of fish that lived in the Straits of Messina, the body of water that flows between Sicily and Calabria on the Italian mainland. The fish was supposed to

Diagram showing the sympathies between the macro and microcosm, featured in Mundus Subterraneus.

be susceptible to a certain kind of song “by which,” Kircher wrote, “mariners are wont to allure it to follow their vessels.” But those plans had to be put aside because of the earthquakes that devastated much of Calabria in the spring of 1638.

Kircher recalled that the earthquake began as he and some others crossed the straits in a boat. The sea was “raging beyond what is usual” and began “stirring up huge whirlpools.” The island volcano of Stromboli was “throwing up huge billows of smoke,” and there was “a certain subterranean lowing, if you will, which we were reckoning to be the cracking of the earth and which seemed to conspire with the odor of sulfur to insinuate the complete, fatal and funereal destruction of Calabria and Sicily.”

Despite a “cracking racket” and a “noisome odor,” and the fact that the “sea itself was boiling,” Kircher and his party made it across to the mainland side. But soon enough came “a subterranean racket and din, similar to chariots driven at top speed.” The earth “leapt up from below with so forceful a motion that I, no longer able to stand on my feet, was laid low, suddenly dashed down with face flat on the ground.”

Kircher experienced “the intolerable frenzy of the earth,” and at one point even the feeling of his soul being “loosened from its corporeal fetters,” but survived to witness the resulting devastation. Through subsequent days of walking, his group “came upon nothing but cadavers of cities and the horrific ruins of castles,” he remembered. “Considering the men straggling through open fields as if extinguished for their fear, you would have said that at that very moment the day of final judgment was looming.”

Kircher’s firsthand experience of this earthquake, which killed something like ten thousand people, might have put him off his investigations into the “miracles of subterraneous nature.” But these horrible occurrences had also presented him with an opportunity for study. “After having diligently searched out the incredible power of Nature working in subterraneous burrows and passages,” he wrote, “I had a great desire to know whether Vesuvius also had not some secret commerce and correspondence with Stromboli and Aetna.”



Illustration of Mount Etna, featured in Mundus Subterraneus.

There was only one way, in his view, to find out. Vesuvius at that time was merely smoking. But its first major eruption in centuries had occurred seven years earlier, in 1631. Kircher hired “an honest country-man, for a true and skillful companion,” and the two began hiking their way up to the forty-two-hundred-foot summit at midnight. (Perhaps the reason for leaving at that hour was to be able to see in the dark anything that might be molten. Or maybe the idea was to allow for a full day of exploration once they got there.) The way was “difficult, rough, uneven, and steep.”

When they finally reached the top, Kircher looked down into the crater. “I thought I beheld the habitation of Hell,” he wrote, “wherein nothing seemed to be much

wanting besides the horrid fantasm and apparitions of Devils." He heard "horrible bellowings and roarings" and there was "an unexpressible stink." The smoke and fire and stench "continually belch'd forth out of eleven several places, and made me in like manner belch, and as it were, vomit back again, at it."

When the morning light came, Kircher recalled, "I chose a safe and secure place to set my feet sure upon, which was a huge Rock, of a plain surface, to which there lay open an avenue, by a descent of the mountain very far. . . . And so I went down unto it."



Illustration of Mount Vesuvius into which Kircher climbed, featured in *Mundus Subterraneus*.

The inside of the volcano was, "all up and down everywhere, cragged and broken." But there was no gradual decline; the volcano's chamber was "made hollow directly and straight." The bottom was "boiling with an everlasting gushing forth, and streamings of smoke and flames, and employed in decocting Sulphur, Bitumen and the melting and burning of other kinds of Minerals."

Because the vapors and gases "know not how to be contained" within the molten matter, they did so "scatter the burden that lay upon them, with such great force and violence, accompanied with horrible cracklings and noises, that the mountain seemed to be tossed with an earthquake or trembling." Those

spewings caused "the softer parts of the Mountain," made of, Kircher suggests, ashes, cinders, rains, and "the refuse of minerals," to be shaken to pieces and loosened; they fell "like Hills, into the bottom of the Hellish gulph." And that made the kind of sound that even "the stoutest and most undaunted heart would scarce venture to suffer."

It was within this hollow mountain that Kircher really began to develop the theories he set down so many years later in *Mundus Subterraneus*, to envision what it might be like even deeper within the earth, and how the mountains and fires and rivers and oceans might somehow all be connected. Calculating the significance of that moment in the history of science is a lot harder than mentioning what appear to be two direct influences on culture: The creation of Bernini's *Fountain of the Four Rivers* in Rome was certainly informed by Kircher's ideas about the interior structure of the earth as well as his ideas about the mystical nature of the universe (that's another story). And the spirited, bumbling polymath-dreamer of Jules Verne's *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, who leads a subterranean descent through an old volcanic crater, certainly seems to be based on Kircher himself.

John Glassie is a former contributing editor to *The New York Times Magazine*, and has written for *The Believer*, *The New York Times*, *Salon*, and *Wired*, among other publications. This essay was adapted from his biography of Athanasius Kircher, *A Man of Misconceptions: The Life of an Eccentric in an Age of Change*

, which is being published by Riverhead Books on Nov. 8th.

Links to Works

- *Mundus Subterraneus* (1665), by Athanasius Kircher
 - Internet Archive
- *The Vulcano's: Or, Burning and Fire–vomiting Mountains, Famous in the World: With their Remarkables. Collected for the most part out of Kircher's Subterraneous World* (1669), English translation of Kircher.
 - Internet Archive link – (NB: scanned by Google so under a non-commercial license)
 - Text version at Wichita State University – (NB: no explicit license attached to transcription)

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Austria boy finds euro banknotes in Danube in Vienna - BBC News bbc.com

- 7 December 2015



Police in Austria are investigating how bank notes worth tens of thousands of euros ended up in the River Danube.

The notes were found floating down the river in Vienna on Saturday, leading one passer-by to jump in and salvage the money.

A police spokesman told the BBC that the recovered

It is not clear if the money was put in the water as part of a laundering operation

money was worth some €100,000 (£72,000; \$108,000).

Police said there were no crimes were recorded in the area and that it was not clear where the money originated.

Image caption

Reports in Austria said officers had first believed the money - made up of €500 and €100 notes - was counterfeit, but they now believe the notes to be genuine.

They were first alerted when bystanders spotted a boy in the river on Saturday. Fearing he was attempting suicide, they called police, only to find he was trying to retrieve the money.

Anyone who finds money and hands it to police in Austria is entitled to keep between 5% and 10% of the total.

But if the owner is not found within a year, the whole sum will be handed to the boy.

Image copyright Vienna

Police

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The origin of the money is murky



The boy, whose name has not been released, netted thousands of euros from the Danube

Image copyright Vienna Police

Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

Averett Amateur Spiritualists Arrested for Grave Robbery

CHATHAM, Va., April 10.—A group of six students of Averett College, Chatham, Va., were arrested today for robbing a grave and holding a seance.

The students were arrested by Sheriff Dabney Hall, who said they had been reading about spiritualism and decided "as a joke" to go to a cemetery on Pigg family property to dig up a grave to gather remains for a seance. On March 1, during the day, they took turns shoveling the soil of a grave until they reached the coffin. They removed

I can't remember what I was researching when I ran across the article "*Students Rob Grave to Hold Weird Seance*", but as soon as I saw the words "Averett College" and "Chatham, VA" in the body, I abandoned whatever it was.

GRAVE ROBBING BEFORE SEANCE

New York, Thursday.—A human skull and bones used during spiritual seances, led to six college students being charged with grave robbing at Chatham (Virginia) today.

Sheriff Dabney Hall said the students (four youths and two girls) were accused of opening a grave in the Pigg family burying ground and removing a skull and bones.

One of the accused was Jay Pigg, whose family owned the graveyard.

The students admitted that they sat round the skull and bones at three seances held in a room at Averett College, said Sheriff Hall.

They were indicted by a special grand jury.

Grave robbing in Virginia carries a penalty of from five to 10 years in prison.

The scandal involved Jay Heze(kiah) Ford Pigg, a member of a prominent Pittsylvania County family and five of his friends: Clifton Cook (21), Miss Merle Goad (20), Robert Leach (20), Miss Carol Stuart (21), and Steve Meadows (20). With the exception of Leach, who attended Danville Technical Institute, the gaggle of ghouls were Averett commuter students. They had been reading about spiritualism and decided "as a joke" to go to a cemetery on Pigg family property to dig up a grave to gather remains for a seance. On March 1, during the day, they took turns shoveling the soil of a grave until they reached the coffin. They removed

Back at the graveyard, Dennis Jones noticed that the grave had been tampered with and contacted law enforcement. The six original grave robbers were indicted for violation of sepulture and faced five to ten years in prison, a pretty serious penalty for what was originally intended as a prank. To make matters worse, the story appeared in newspapers across the country after being picked up by the Associated Press drawing unwanted attention to the area.

All six pranksters plead not guilty to the charges. Some of them didn't think their actions were illegal because the grave was on Jay's family's property. In the end, they were found not guilty of the original charge, but they were found guilty of trespassing and each was fined \$50.



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Within a week or two, so THE DISPATCH correspondent was informed by an official of the Smithsonian Institution to-day, not less than 2,000 people have requested to see the "devil baby," and the gentlemen of the institution have just discovered what it all means. A short time since a country paper in Minnesota published a story that a young priest attempted to sell pictures of the Madonna and child to a virago, who said that she would be the devil's baby if he had had one.

Born With Horns and Tail.

The woman was "enciente" at the time, and when a child was born it had horns, cloven feet and a forked tail. It lived but a short time, and, as the story went, was secured by a scientific gentleman and forwarded to the Smithsonian. The republication of this absurd story in various places has sent thousands of visitors to see the *lusus nature*, and the authorities of the institution have been subjected to almost unbearable annoyance.

Bad Air: Pollution, Sin, and Science Fiction in William Delisle Hay's *The Doom of the Great City* (1880)

publicdomainreview.org

Deadly fogs, moralistic diatribes, debunked medical theory – Brett Beasley explores a piece of Victorian science fiction considered to be the first modern tale of urban apocalypse.



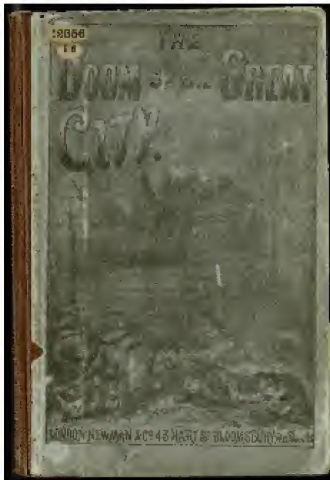
Coloured aquatint, ca. 1862, depicting a man covering his mouth with a handkerchief, walking through a smoggy London street – Source: Wellcome Library

Scarcely can I pourtray in words the dire and dismal scenes that met my vision here... For here, where on the previous night had throbbled hot and high the flood-tide of London's evening gaiety, was now presented to my poor fevered sight, the worst, the most awful features of the whole terrific calamity. I had entered into the very heart and home of horror itself.

This is the way the world ends: not with a bang but a bronchial spasm. That is, at least, according to William Delisle Hay's 1880 novella *The Doom of the Great City*. It imagines the entire population of London choked to death under a soot-filled fog. The story is told by the event's lone survivor sixty years later as he recalls "the greatest calamity that perhaps this earth has ever witnessed" at what was, for Hay's first readers, the distant future date of 1942.

The novella received only mild acclaim among its late Victorian readers, and today it is almost forgotten. But, surprisingly enough, it has become possible to read our social and environmental problems foretold in Hay's strange little story. In our age of global warming, acid rain, and atmospheric pollution, we may become the first readers to take Hay seriously. When Hay imagines a city whose wealth and "false social system" lulls it into complacency, we can recognize ourselves in his words. And as for those air problems that loomed dangerously around them, Londoners "looked upon them in the light of a regular institution, not caring to investigate their cause with a view to some means of mitigating them". At moments like these, we get the feeling that Hay's obscure 135-year-old story is eerily prophetic.

But before we canonize Hay as an environmentalist and his story as *An Inconvenient Truth* in Victorian garb, we have to look at the story's other features. Readers of *The Doom of the Great City* unfailingly notice that the story does not fit easily with other science fiction narratives, but seems to belong also to another class of tales, which Brian Stableford has called "ringing accounts of richly deserved punishment". This is because Hay's narrator seems to slide back and forth between material and moral explanations for pollution. While he talks of how "In those latter days there had been past years of terribly bad weather, destroying harvests", he adds in the same paragraph, "prostitution flourished rampantly, while Chastity laid down her head and died! Evil! — one seemed to see it everywhere!"



Front cover of Hay's *The Doom of the Great City* – Source .

In fact, the narrator goes so far as to cast himself as a prophet. Like a latterday Jeremiah he reviles London as “foul and rotten to the very core, and steeped in sin of every imaginable variety”. In a twenty-page diatribe he catalogues vices such as prodigality, corruption, avarice, and aestheticism — not to mention feminine vanity, for which he reserves special scorn. He denounces tradesmen, aristocrats, theater-goers, and the young as well as the old. For him, London is like Atlantis or Babylon standing blithely unaware of the divine wrath about to strike it.

All of this raises an important question: can pollution be material (i.e. made of soot, ashes, smoke, chemicals, etc.) and moral as well?

The same question could also be stated as a problem of genre.

What exactly are we reading when we read *The Doom of the Great City*? Is it a forward-looking sci-fi tale about a dystopian future that may yet arrive? Or is it a fantasy of divine retribution that belongs with the ancient past?

In order to answer that question, we need a working definition of science fiction. For that definition we could look to Rod Serling's statement that science fiction is “the improbable made possible”. Hay certainly draws from available scientific ideas to make his improbable story into a reasonable possibility. Hay's contemporary F. A. R. Russell consistently noted higher instances of death from asthma and respiratory complaints during intense fogs, and he published widely in an effort to raise public concern about them. But Hay's literary precursors (like the public in general) tended to see the fog as a mere nuisance. They could even at times show some fanciful tenderness toward it as toward an ugly pet that won't go away. For example, William Guppy in Dickens' 1853 novel *Bleak House* describes the fog in familiar terms as “The London Particular”. But Hay makes that seemingly friendly pet bite — and, increasingly, the data was on his side.



“Old king Coal” and the Fog Demon’, a cartoon featured in *Punch*, November 1880, the year in which Hay's novella was published – Source: Universität Heidelberg .

In addition to the evidence of news and anecdotes, Hay needed a plausible cause of death, not just for the infirm, but for an entire metropolitan population. That is where the “bronchial spasm” comes in. Hay, a published scientist (specifically a mycologist) is scrupulous on this point. On the chance journey into the country that saves his life, Hay's protagonist discusses the fog with a friend who also happens to be a leading medical authority, one Wilton Forrester. Forrester gives “the benefit of his *scientific* acquirements,” (emphasis mine) by laying out what he considers to

be the only possible scenario in which a fog can prove fatal. He explains that in a case he previously observed

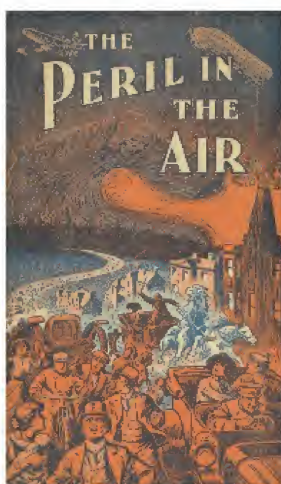


Detail from the image above showing some of the fatal diseases London's polluted fog could bring: pleurisy, pneumonia, bronchitis, and asthma.

The bronchi and tubes ramifying from them were clogged with black, grimy mucus, and death had evidently resulted from a sudden spasm, which would produce suffocation, as the lungs would not have the power in their clogged condition of making a sufficiently forcible expiratory effort to get rid of the accumulated filth that was the instrument of death.

Hay goes so far as to include footnotes referencing actual medical authorities on this point. Rather than seeming far-

fetched, Hay's first readers could hardly have doubted that, past a certain threshold of pollution, a fog would certainly prove fatal to those who inhaled it.



Front cover for a 1913 booklet advertising Peps tablets for coughs and colds brought on by smog. A skull-faced Death appears in a swirling cloud of pollution over a city from which terrified inhabitants are fleeing – Source: Wellcome Library.

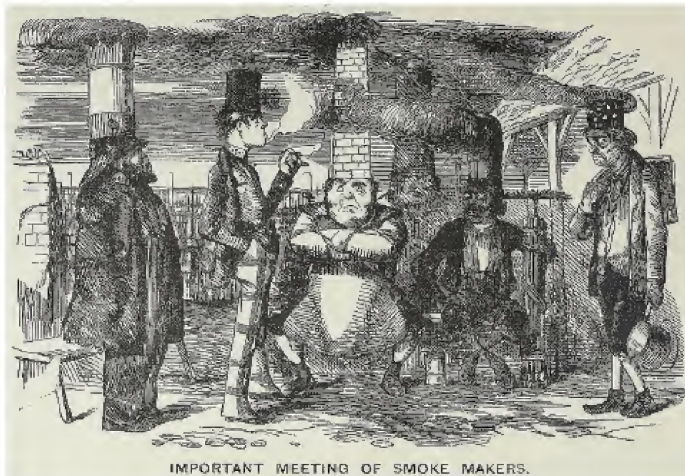
Read closely and in its context, the science in Hay's novella is not just persuasive, it is also politic. Writing in 1880, Hay was working at a time in which science and the emerging discipline of public health were in a state of flux. Long-held views about the causes and consequences of disease were being eroded by new findings, especially the emerging germ theory of disease. Thus, in attempting to write a fictional work that used science to "make the improbable possible", a writer like Hay would have to navigate a changing terrain of what counted as possibility.

In his emphasis on filth in both its moral and material forms, Hay was borrowing the vocabulary and social ethic of what have been called the "anti-contagionists". The anti-contagionists tended to hold the belief that diseases spread by miasma, or "bad air". The bad air could come from any number of places: from corpses or other rotting organic materials, from the bodies and homes of the poor, from cesspools and stagnant or dirty water, and even, in the view of one important miasmatist, from the groundwater lying beneath a city.

Most miasmatists equated bad air with bad smell. Thus, miasmatist works like Edwin Chadwick's *Report of the Sanitary Conditions of the Working Classes* can be read not just for their contribution to the

emerging discipline of epidemiology, but also as veritable anthologies of stories about stench. Chadwick correlates "miasmatic exhalations", "putrid" and "obnoxious effluvia", "pestiferous vapours and fogs", "vitiated" and "foul air", "noisome vapours", "injurious gas", and "foul ordure" with outbreaks of diseases like cholera and typhus. For him, the only solution was to institute broad sanitary reforms to remove the causes of these bad airs. At their best, the miasmatists practiced social medicine that included a focus on diet, education, and forms of social uplift. At their worst, they were racist and classist bureaucrats. But whatever their

scientific and ideological deficiencies, miasmatists were amazingly successful at marshalling the resources and political will (often with the important tool of disgust at their disposal) to create a compelling vision of the sanitary city. If, as Chadwick put it, “all smell is disease”, then only a city-wide solution could possibly stop it.



“Important Meeting of Smoke Makers”, a cartoon featured in *Punch* (1853) – Source: Universität Heidelberg.

But by the time Hay was penning his tale in 1880, the whole miasmatist position was losing its power to provoke the kind of disgust necessary for political action. Analyzing the “Great Stink” of Paris, which also occurred in 1880, David S. Barnes shows that “scientific progress as represented by the nascent germ theory of disease, may actually have blocked rather than accelerated remedial mobilization”. The germ theory suggested that diseases were not spread by the air at all, whether good or bad, smelly or pure. Thus the stink could not produce what Barnes calls a “sensory crisis”,

whereas a similar Great Stink in London in 1858 led to comprehensive sanitary reforms.

Thus, Hay’s lurid tale of destruction is technically scientific while also being a bricolage of available science. From the miasma theory, he takes his focus on the air and his social ethic. But he also jettisons the mechanism of miasma itself. I quote again from Dr Wilton Forrester, this time reading from a newspaper: “we must suppose that a gush of foul sewer-gas, or some similar poisoning of the thick and heavy air, produced the fatal effect”. This popular belief in miasmas he finds laughable. In fact, Hay gives us an indication that Forrester, as a cutting-edge medical professional, accepts the germ theory. But he has Forrester mention it only in passing on the way to what is a clear espousal of a non-germ cause of death:

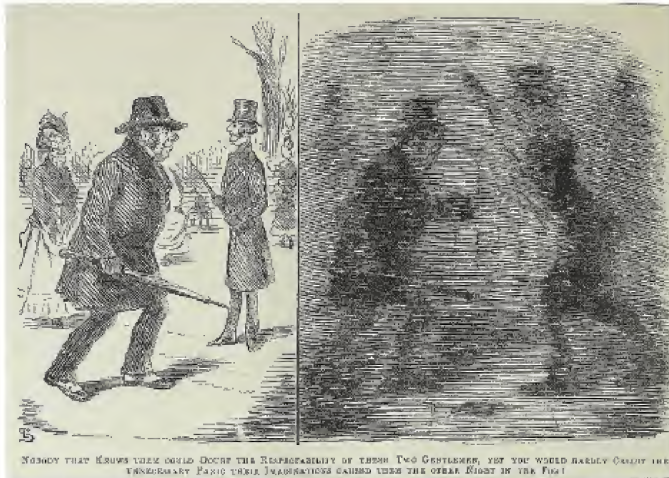
No; I see only one way in which the fog is likely to act as a life-destroying agent — apart, that is, from its action in carrying poisonous germs and spreading epidemics, which illustrates its slower action — but as a rapid and immediate extinguisher of vitality the cause must be bronchial spasm.

Germes here represent a “slower action”, a secondary and in this case minimal threat. Hay allows this concession to the germ theory while retaining urgency for something like the older filth theory, although it is now presented as mere mechanical suffocation rather than disease.

In order to understand Hay’s work in its totality, then, we have to see it not just as representing a particular view of science, but a changing view of danger and how danger relates to a social system. As the anthropologist Mary Douglas showed in her groundbreaking work *Purity and Danger*, pollution behavior always has to do with the maintenance of a social system. She writes, “Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. This idea of dirt takes

us straight into the field of symbolism and promises a link-up with more obviously symbolic systems of purity”.

Thus, for Douglas, rituals either in modern secular cultures or in primitive ones, reinforce duties, relationships, and morality.



Cartoon featured in *Punch*, November 1870 – Source: Universität Heidelberg.

Douglas' theories help us explain the climax of Hay's tale, which is a single spectacle that he calls "the most horrible, the most gruesome, the most ghostly and unutterably terrific of all". He sees all the gradations of London society illuminated by gas lamps in a theater but fixed in a kind of collective rigor mortis. He writes:

I had a full and instant view of the whole interior. The gas still burnt, and threw a light upon the scene more brilliant than perhaps it had been on the previous night; and the people—no, not the people, the DEAD!—there

under the glaring light they sat, they lay, they hung over the benches, the galleries, the boxes, in one tremendous picture of catastrophe!

And again, later:

Yes, there they lay, the old, the young, the rich, the poor; of all ranks, and stations, and qualities, all huddled in one cold and hideous death; while open eyes, piteous faces, distorted limbs, and strange, unnatural attitudes told the tremendous tale of that sudden midnight agony.

Douglas writes that, failing their normal supportive functions, filth rituals can also enact a shattering and renewal of social systems. Every duty is taken out of place and disordered to the point of creating a productive "formlessness". Only in this "final stage of total disintegration" can formlessness become a symbol not just of decay but of "beginning and of growth". Or as Mircea Eliade put it in discussing tales of water cataclysms:

In water everything is "dissolved," every "form" is broken up, everything that has happened ceases to exist; nothing that was before remains after immersion in water, not an outline, not a "sign," not an event. Immersion is the equivalent, at the human level, of death at the cosmic level, of the cataclysm (the Flood) which periodically dissolves the world into primeval ocean. Breaking up all forms, doing away with the past, water possesses this power of purifying, of regenerating, of giving new birth ... Water purifies and regenerates because it nullifies the past, and restores — even if only for a moment — the integrity of the dawn of things.

So, in the end, if Hay's novella speaks to us today, it is not because Hay writes a rigorous

science fiction tale using a form of science we recognize as our own. It is rather because his confusion — or what we see as confusion — helps us understand our own predicament better. Even in our most rigorously scientific environmental efforts, we still feel the need for moral parables. One thinks of the decidedly unscientific analogy of the boiled frog amidst the otherwise rigorous claims in *An Inconvenient Truth*. And certainly there are strains of dystopian imaginings and apocalyptic visions in some environmentalist writings — why shouldn't there be? As Hay knew, in order to combat the ills of society we need to appeal to both science and morality — and if that doesn't work, a little horror can't hurt.

Brett Beasley is a doctoral student at Loyola University Chicago. His research focuses on attitudes toward death in late nineteenth-century literature and culture.

Public Domain Works

- *The Doom of the Great City : Being the Narrative of a Survivor, Written A.D. 1942* (1880), by William Delisle Hay.
 - State Library of Victoria
- *London Fogs* (1880), by Francis Albert Rollo Russell.
 - JSTOR

Further Reading

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- Stableford, Brian. "Ecology and Dystopia." *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 259–280.



Dirty Old London: The Victorian Fight Against Filth (Yale University Press, 2014)

Lee Jackson

A tour through the underbelly of Victorian filth, and an introduction to the men and women who attempted to stem the rising tide of pollution which accompanied the rapid growth of the capital.



Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (Routledge, 2002)

Mary Douglas

Tracing the words and meaning of dirt in different contexts, and how what is regarded as dirt in a given society is any matter considered out of place. Listed by the TLS as one of the 100 most influential non-fiction books published since 1945.

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Bahraini pilot lodges appeal over sex toy fine

By Staff Writer

Monday, 7 December 2015 12:14 PM

arabianbusiness.com

A pilot who was fined for allegedly attempting to smuggle sex toys into Bahrain has lodged an appeal against the penalty, according to local media.

Gulf Daily News reported the 49-year-old Bahraini pilot was detained by customs officials at Bahrain International Airport when they became suspicious after he was observed walking unusually.

The pilot, who arrived on a flight from Thailand, was found to have two sex toys hidden in his socks, with another in his jacket, according to prosecutors in the Lower Criminal Court.

He was fined BD200 (\$530) for importing obscene items, which the newspaper reported he is due to appeal to the High Criminal Appeals Court today.

In his defence, the pilot said he brought the sex toys for health reasons.

"I was hiding them (sex toys) because I was embarrassed, but my intention was not to smuggle them," he said in a statement to prosecutors.

"I bought them for my friends and myself for personal use to help us sexually because we suffer from severe diabetes. Inside the sex toy there is a device that helps that."

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Nicholas Reilly for Metro.co.uk Monday 30 Nov 2015 11:59 am

It might sound like something from the opening scenes of Inception – but this bizarre noise is plaguing the streets of Manchester, and it's being caused by an apartment block.

The Beetham Tower first opened in 2005 – and has been responsible for the sound emerging every time the area is battered by high winds.

The din in question is caused by the building's glass blade, and engineers have scaled the 47-floor building on a number of occasions to unsuccessfully correct the problem.

In 2012, architect Ian Simpson, who lives in the tower, even apologised for the noise.



Mystery hum around Manchester tower that cannot be silenced

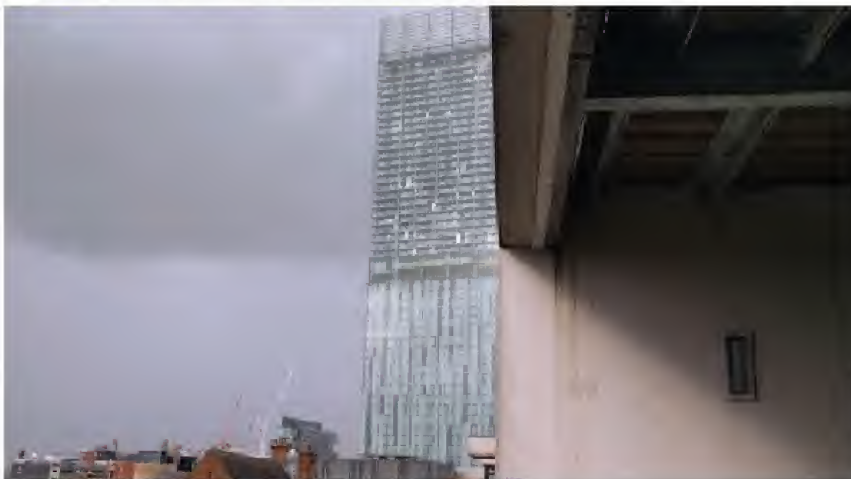
The Beetham Tower makes a right old racket (Picture: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images)

But it hasn't stopped the fair folk of Manchester from being just a teeny bit freaked out.

Some were terrified by the mysterious din

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[Back to top](#)



Terrifying. (Picture: YouTube)

Beyond the Bonds of Death: Four Places to Find Houdini's Legend Still Living in NYC

atlasobscura.com

by Allison Meier / 25 Feb 2014



Houdini and a crate

Houdini in his crate escape trick, first performed in New York's East River (via New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Billy Rose Theatre Collection)

Harry Houdini arrived in New York City in 1886, an anonymous Budapest-born newcomer in the frenetic cityscape. By the time he died in 1926, however, he was the city's most thrilling performer, and the shadow of the great escape artist still remains.

It was while performing in Coney Island that he met his future wife Bess, in Flatbush where he recorded his voice on wax cylinders with Thomas Edison, and in 1917 he performed his straightjacket escape above a Times Square crowd while hanging upside down from a crane being employed to work on the subway. In the East River he survived his first crate escape, tossed in the currents between Manhattan and Brooklyn, and in 1926 he escaped from a coffin at the bottom of a pool in the Shelton Hotel on Lexington (now a Marriott Hotel). In 1918, he even made an elephant vanish at the New York Hippodrome.

Yet more than a stage, New York was Houdini's home. Here are four places in New York City where you can still find the great magician manifested:

Home in Harlem
278 West 113th Street, Manhattan

Google Maps)

Houdini's home in Harlem (in the center with the small balcony) (via



Houdini's home in West Harlem

When Houdini hit it big in 1904, he bought a stately brownstone up in Harlem on 113th Street, where he would live until his 1926 death. The neighborhood at the time was mostly Jewish and German, and Houdini settled in by making his house into a place of respite and practice. An oversized bathtub was installed so that he could perfect his underwater escape tricks, and he kept a vast library of books on magic.

While with the little balcony and unchanged façade you can still almost imagine Houdini stepping out from its doorway (on which a historic red plaque rests in honor of his residency), it is still a private home and its current owner reportedly isn't fond of the flood of visiting fans who arrive on Halloween, the anniversary of Houdini's death. However, you can appreciate the home from the street and imagine the escape artist within developing some new impossible escape.

Houdini Museum

421 Seventh Avenue, Manhattan



Houdini Museum in NYC

Houdini Museum (via Houdini Museum & Fantasma Magic)

One place that is happy to welcome fans is the small Houdini Museum inside Roger Dreyer's Fantasma magic shop across from Penn Station on Seventh Avenue. The museum opened in 2012 and is formed from Dreyer's private collection of Houdini memorabilia, with hundreds of items from vintage posters to straightjackets to handcuffs, and even the trunk in which he performed his

"Metamorphosis" trick. The collection continues to expand, with recent acquisitions including Houdini's Escape Coffin from 1907, which he managed to free himself from in 66 minutes after it was banged shut with six inch nails.

Machpelah Cemetery

Glendale, Queens

Over in the quiet Machpelah Cemetery in Glendale, Queens, you can find the final resting place of Houdini. The Jewish cemetery is part of the broad band of burial grounds that cuts across the borough, but you can easily spot Houdini's grave out at the front of the cemetery

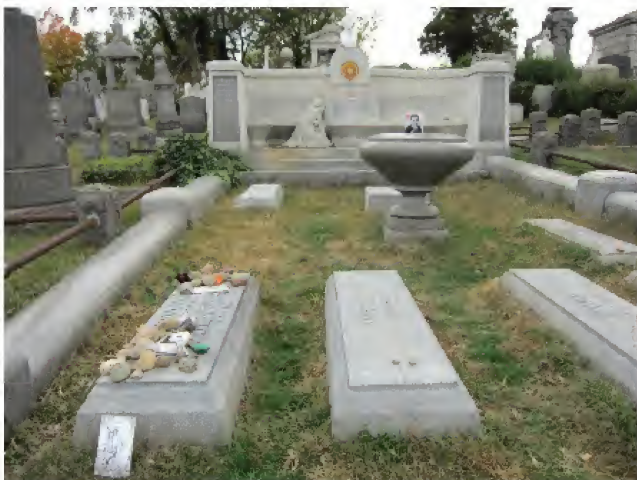


Houdini's headstone (photograph by the author)

where a bust of the illusionist rests above a crest of the Society of American Magicians. A statue of a mourning woman presses herself to the monument. The headstone of Houdini at the front left of the family plot is usually covered with trinkets from visitors, including playing cards and other magic relics.

It's here that some still gather to await a return from the grave, believing that someday the greatest escape artist will break through the chains of death and communicate with the living. This has yet to happen, but it is true that he was buried in a coffin used in his

performances where he did just that.



Houdini's family plot (photograph by the author)

McSorley's Old Ale House 15 E 7th Street, Manhattan

*Handcuffs in McSorley's - not Houdini's
(photograph by Bee Collins)*

Finally, while Houdini has yet to rise again in Queens, some believe he visits McSorley's Old Ale House in the East Village. Where this belief got started is not quite clear, although the legend long held that if you saw a cat in the window it meant Houdini was revisiting the bar in the afterlife (sadly, resident cat Minnie McSorley is no longer welcome in the bar due to the health department).



Houdini handcuffs at Mcsorley's

Specters aside, if you are drinking in the ale house, one of New York's oldest dating back to 1854, you may notice among the sawdust and cluttered curios some handcuffs attached to the bottom bar rail. Many sources cite these as Houdini's, although they are in fact at type made after his death. It's the older handcuffs hanging higher in the bar that are more likely to be from Houdini. Sure, it might seem a little wild for a drinking establishment to have such museum-worthy memorabilia, but this

is McSorley's which has everything from a John Wilkes booth wanted poster to wishbones on a gas lamp said to have been left by young men departing for the Great War. Whether or not

the ghost of Houdini has jangled his chains amid the din of drinking, you can likely find someone sitting near those bar rail handcuffs who would be happy to add some story to the legend.



McSorley's Old Ale House

McSorley's (photograph by Jeff Rosen)

Minnie McSorley haunting the window in her glory days (photograph by Cayuga Outrigger)

Houdini being lowered into the East River in 1912 (via Library of Congress)

Magic Week is February 24-28, 2014 at Atlas Obscura. Follow along on (hashtag #MagicWeek), Facebook, & Tumblr.



Minnie the cat at McSorley's



Houdini in a crate in the New York Harbor

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Bigfoot is Scaring Up Stories and Tourism Dollars in Southeastern Oklahoma npr.org

December 10, 2015 | 10:52 AM

By Logan Layden



Logan Layden / StateImpact Oklahoma Charles Benton, who claims to have seen Bigfoot, stands with a statue of the creature in front of Janet's Treasure Chest in Honobia, Okla.

The stories go back for generations.

Reports of *something* not quite human in the wooded hills of far southeastern Oklahoma. The legend of Bigfoot is growing in McCurtain County — and attracting tourists.

Bigfoot getting bigger

Charles Benton says he *knows* what he saw five years ago a few miles north of Broken Bow, deep in the woods near Hochatown. It's where he says a turkey hunt turned into the scare of a lifetime.

"Behind me I could hear this moaning, this grunting. And I could feel it almost," Benton says.

He's tall, burley, with a weathered face and a long white beard — not Bigfoot, Charles Benton.

"I was on my all fours there for a minute," Benton says, describing the experience. "When I got back to my knees and was getting up — see the trees that make kind of a 'V'? Right there. In between those two trees, down there in that creek."

He says the creature turned and looked right at him.

"I Ran up this hill, ran past my blind, my tent and all my camping stuff. Ran to my truck and never came back," Benton says.

His equipment is still there, the colors of the collapsed tent and empty soda cans faded from years of sitting in the sun. And after chatting with people in Hochatown, it's clear Benton's story isn't unique.

There are Bigfoot stories that go back generations in this area. There was even a low-budget 1972 horror movie called "The Legend of Boggy Creek" about a creature across the border in southern Arkansas.

It's easy to find skeptics, too, like Michele Finch-Walker, who runs a winery in Hochatown. She works part time for the state forestry department, and isn't convinced about Bigfoot.

"I don't know. I really don't think so," she says. "But I hate to say that. It's more fun to say you believe the legend."

Southeastern Oklahoma's Bigfoot legend is growing and attracting more tourists.

The curious come to Hochatown

Sharon Hill runs a blog called Doubtful News that puts a critical eye on monster stories, UFO sightings, and false-flag conspiracy theories. She's seen this kind of thing before — like ghost tourism, or UFO attractions in places like Roswell, N.M.

"These small towns want a way to have a celebration and bring out people and help their businesses. So it's definitely gaining popularity," she says. "Dark tourism is big — some things on crime and death. And then there's strange tourism when there's like mystery spots, or anomalous lights, or new-age energy vortexes"

Hill has researched most of the country's monsters.

"There's Mothman. There's also Lizard Man in South Carolina. In Wisconsin or in Michigan there's the Dogman or the Wisconsin Werewolf," she says.



Logan Layden / StateImpact Oklahoma Charles Benton examines the destroyed campsite he says he ran from after seeing Bigfoot.

They all have one thing in common: They bring people to those places, like Janet's Treasure Chest in Hochatown. Janet Cress runs the gift shop, as well as high-end cabins near Beaver's Bend State Park.

"Bigfoot coasters, Bigfoot stickers, Bigfoot pamphlets, Bigfoot t-shirts, Bigfoot hats," Cress says. "Bigfoot's been very good to me. I cannot complain."

She says someone comes to her store looking for Bigfoot trinkets everyday. The giant Bigfoot statue in front of the store draws them in.

"They're either believers or nonbelievers or someone in their family or somebody at work, somebody they know believes in Bigfoot, all the time," Cress says.

In Hochatown, there's Janet's shop and a new business called Bigfoot Jeep Rentals, and an annual Bigfoot festival in neighboring LeFlore County. Bigfoot marches in Broken Bow's Christmas parade — or someone dressed like Bigfoot does.

This is a beautiful part of the state, with many attractions beyond Bigfoot. But real or not, the creature is leaving an economic footprint in southeast Oklahoma.

StateImpact Oklahoma is a partnership among Oklahoma's public radio stations and relies on contributions from readers and listeners to fulfill its mission of public service to Oklahoma and beyond. Donate online.

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Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City investigating after wafer appears to bleed three days after communion

fox13now.com

Posted 8:35 pm, November 25, 2015, by Matt McDonald Updated at 11:39am, November 26, 2015

KEARNS, Utah -- The Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City is investigating an event that some are calling a miracle inside the Saint Xavier church in Kearns.

Last week, during the holy communion, a host was returned to the father overseeing the service. A host is the small wafer handed out as part of the communion. The father placed the host in glass of water near the head of the church. Typically, the host will dissolve away in a few minutes.

Three days later, members of the church say the host was still floating and it appeared to be bleeding. Word spread, and the church filled with people. For a short time, the host was on display.

The Salt Lake City Diocese has taken possession of the host, appointing a committee to look into the incident. The head of the committee, Monsignor M. Francis Mannion issued this statement:

"Recently, reports of a bleeding host at St. Francis Xavier Church in Kearns have been circulating within the diocese. Monsignor Colin F. Bircumshaw, Diocesan Administrator, has appointed an ad hoc committee of individuals with various backgrounds to investigate the matter. The work of the committee is now underway. The results will be made public.

The host is now in the custody of the Diocesan Administrator. Contrary to rumor, there are NO current plans for public exposition or adoration.

Whatever the outcome of the investigation, we can use this time to renew our faith and devotion in the greatest miracle -- the Real Presence of Jesus Christ that takes place at every Mass.

*Msgr. M. Francis Mannion
Committee Chair"*

There are no plans to make the host available for public view or adoration, according to the Diocese. However, the results of the investigation will be made public when it is complete.

40.659947 -111.996328

24 comments

- wedwasinski

IT WAS MOLD!

November 26, 2015 at 12:28 am

• **Jennifer King**

Red mold only grows outdoors, on damp wood or decomposing plants.

November 26, 2015 at 6:40 pm

■ **Jeff Sampson**

Red mold can grow anywhere it is damp especially your bathroom.

November 27, 2015 at 1:45 pm

• **O'malley**

Don't worry, despite what many people think, we Catholics aren't stupid. Of course it may be mold. It may have had exposure outdoors before being brought in. It could be some sort of a prank perpetrated by people who hate Catholics and would like to insult their intelligence by playing a game with us and what we believe in.

I would have thought that mold on bread are usually green? Also, I thought that communion wafers would quickly dissolve in water? (When I receive communion, I don't chew, and let it dissolve- it lasts less than 20 mins.) How is it that it's still intact for 3 days? Obviously 20 mins. Isn't fast enough for mold to grow. But how would it last for 3 days solely for the purpose of allowing mold to grow?

Maybe it's neither blood nor mold, but some other substance? If it's something like paint or ink, then surely, someone is messing with us.

November 27, 2015 at 9:35 pm

• **anotherbob**

lol all the sheep come a flocking when a silly wafer changes colors, then all it a miracle? Please.

November 26, 2015 at 2:37 am

• **Faux News**

SEE! The Pope is right the MoMo's are wrong. LOL! All religion is organized tax free crime. I respect your right to believe what makes you "happy and at peace" but do not buy into the shams of any religion which manipulates the followers nor do I debate it. Entertaining article though :)

November 26, 2015 at 6:58 am

- **Mizzmonsoon**

Mr. McDonald,

Thank you for this piece.

Here is a useful resource from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops explaining terms, titles, etc. for the next time you need to report on the Catholic Church. A useful tool for the whole newsroom.

<http://www.usccb.org/about/media-relations/upload/how-to-cover-the-mass.pdf>

God bless and Happy Thanksgiving.

November 26, 2015 at 10:09 am

- **bob**

And people make fun of "magic underwear".....

November 26, 2015 at 10:34 am

- **nouveaunday**

Thank you for this newsworthy article. I live in California, but appreciate national news of interest to Catholics, especially as concerns the Blessed Sacrament. Whatever the outcome of the investigation, I look forward to reading more news about this story.

November 26, 2015 at 10:44 am

- **nouveaunday**

Thank you for this newsworthy article. I live in California, but appreciate national news of interest to Catholics, especially as concerns the Blessed Sacrament. Whatever the outcome of the investigation, I look forward to reading more news about this story.

November 26, 2015 at 10:48 am

- **John Foreman**

Feeling blessed

November 26, 2015 at 3:46 pm

- **Karen Sanchez**

I would like to hear from someone who saw this event.

November 26, 2015 at 6:26 pm

- **Karen Sanchez**

I would like to hear from someone who saw this. I am a member of Immaculate Conception in Sparks, NV Thank you!

November 26, 2015 at 6:28 pm

- **Andy Hudat**

Yuck ... cannibalism ... Amazing how stupid people can get when they throw their bibles out and start worshipping a dead Jewish woman as their goddess.

November 26, 2015 at 10:06 pm

- **Paul Thomas**

Amazing how stupid people can get when they spew hate and ignorance like they know what they are talking about.

November 27, 2015 at 12:08 am

- **Patrick**

You may be the most ignorant person I have ever met.

November 27, 2015 at 6:17 am

- **Theodore Holmquist**

Andy– May I suggest you go to Amazon and order a book called “The Catechism of the Catholic Church”? It’s under \$6 new, and used copies are going for as little as a penny (plus shipping). If you bought it and read it, you would avoid making such silly, ignorant statements. From your language it would appear you disagree with the 2,000 years of truth and wisdom espoused by the Catholic Church in favor of some evangelical tradition or another, but having even the slightest idea of what you stand in opposition to might make you look less ill-informed and bigoted. An additional resource you might consult is “The Protestant’s Dilemma” by Devin Rose. It explains, in easy to understand terms, some of the theological (and just plain logical) problems inherent in the protestant/evangelical belief systems, and how those issues are resolved in Catholic doctrine. Unless, of course, you’re more concerned with ignorantly bad-mouthing that which you do not understand than seeking truth. In that case, carry on!

November 27, 2015 at 9:50 am

- **Matt Frost**

Awesome article, but why was the host returned to the priest and even put in water?

November 27, 2015 at 12:02 am

- **Maximilian Nightingale**

If the host is for some reason not fit to eat (e.g. if someone elderly or unstable spit it out), then the host needs to be properly disposed. It is therefore placed in water to dissolve it, so that it no longer has the form of bread, and then can be disposed in a spot set aside for this.

November 27, 2015 at 6:48 am

- **Eric Vostal Hausner**

O, sacrament most holy! O, sacrament divine!
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine!

November 27, 2015 at 3:01 am

- **Moses Ega**

Notify me on the results of this investigation through my email

November 27, 2015 at 4:02 am

- **John**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serratia_marcescens

If you look inside your shower or anywhere where water tends to collect, you typically find *Serratia* ... it's quite literally everywhere, and forms red biofilms. This isn't some sort of miracle, it's a common household bacteria growing in an environment that is perfectly suited for it. The real question is why this is considered newsworthy to begin with.

November 27, 2015 at 10:22 am

- **Paul Thomas**

But even according to the website you used, it is still an unlikely explanation. This is what it says about a different miracle:

"While *Serratia* possibly could generate a single appearance of red pigment, it is unclear how it could have generated more pigment after each wiping, leaving this proposed explanation open to doubt."

November 27, 2015 at 1:35 pm

- **Jeff Sampson**

Sigh, this is most likely one of one of any of a variety of bacteria that produce and orange to red color. If you've ever noticed a redish slime in your shower or toilet bowl, thats the bacterium prodigiosin. Could be what this is.

Miracles come from church leaders, not God. Facts come from God.

November 27, 2015 at 1:36 pm



- **Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City investigating after wafer appears to bleed three days after communion**

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Blind woman with multiple personalities can see when she's a teenage boy

By Beth Spotswood

November 25, 2015 at 2:22 PM

<http://blog.sfgate.com/hottopics/2015/11/25/blind-woman-with-multiple-personalities-can-see-when-shes-a-teenage-boy/>

A 37-year old German woman who survived an accident 17 years ago, is slowly regaining her vision – sometimes. The woman, known as “B.T” also suffers from dissociative identity disorder, and her doctors believe she has over 10 personalities. While being treated for her disorder, the woman’s teenage boy persona could eventually see.

Brain activity tests actually confirm that BT is telling the truth. In some personalities, she can see. In others, B.T. is blind. According to a report in the PsyCh Journal, BT’s ability to see turns on and off “within seconds.”

Dissociative identity disorder (DID) is a controversial diagnosis, believed by some to be the result of years of abuse, while others believe DID to be a cultural invention driven by therapists. It’s not clear if B.T.’s vision-impairing accident occurred at the same time as her 9 other personalities.

Doctors now believe that the accident that BT suffered when she was 20-years-old did nothing to damage her eyes but rather caused so much psychological damage that she became unable to see.

“These presumably serve as a possibility for retreat,” German psychologist Dr. Hans Strasburger told Braindecoder. “In situations that are particularly emotionally intense, the patient occasionally feels the wish to become blind, and thus not ‘need to see’.”

Basically, B.T. is able to see when she’s not experiencing her own, original self – presumably the self that suffered the trauma.

B.T. is not the first person to go “blind” after suffering a trauma. Doctors describe this type of vision impairment as, “a legitimate psychophysiological based syndrome of psychological distress.”

There is a documented case of a German soldier ordered to kill Jews in 1941. Before he was able to murder his intended targets, the soldier went blind overnight.

Bodies of elderly woman and her son found after eerie disappearance

By Yanan Wang
November 30 at 6:00 PM

washingtonpost.com



Beverly Giannonatti, 79, and Greg Giannonatti, 57. (Justice Department)

It seemed like Beverly Giannonatti had come across a stroke of luck, or at the very least, a small fortune. While a cleaning woman was going through the Deer Lodge, Mont., house of her late ex-husband in preparation for Beverly to move back in, she discovered a 25-pound bar of gold.

Its worth was estimated at \$480,000, a bounty indeed in a small town where the median income hovers around \$30,000. Hearing the news from her cleaning lady, the curly-haired 79-year-old went to the house immediately, presumably to retrieve the uncovered treasure.

That was on Oct. 19. Ten days later, Beverly and her 57-year-old son, Greg, vanished without a trace.

The last time that either of them had been seen was Oct. 28, the Montana Standard reports, when Beverly was spotted at a local restaurant with a Caucasian male of about 60. Greg was seen "in an apparent hurry" driving away from his home in a white 1995 Toyota Camry.

Neither of them had been heard from since. Then on Monday, Powell County Sheriff Scott Howard announced that the bodies of the mother and son had been found Sunday night in a dump site in the county, the Montana Standard reported. An unidentified person of interest has been arrested on a 72-hour investigative hold, Howard said at a news conference.

The case has left the tight-knit community reeling.

"The valley has gone from frantic to just sad," a friend of Beverly told the Montana Standard before the bodies were found. "Who would kidnap such a lovely lady?"

While local law enforcement and the FBI, which joined the search in November, have not commented specifically on what might have happened to the mother-son pair, authorities suspect foul play.

Yet there were no signs of struggle at either of their homes, where the doors were locked, the cars parked and the dogs appeared to have been left alone for about five days. Beverly would never leave the house without her dogs, her neighbors say.

At Greg's house, police found warm pot roast in a slow cooker that was still turned on, according to the Standard.

And there was no sign of the gold bar.

"I cannot find that gold bar," Howard told MTN News earlier this month. "I've checked safety deposit boxes and I'm not coming up with any location on that."

Howard told the Missoulian that he hasn't seen anything like this in his nearly 30-year career.

"I can't say I've had two family members go poof off the face of the Earth and left us sniffing a cold

track," Howard said.

Friends of Beverly's started a Facebook page to inform concerned parties about developments in the case. Prayers, worries and fond memories poured in over the weeks as the search continued.

As of Monday morning, the page had 1,516 "likes" — more than one-third of the town's population.

"My worst nightmare is that she's lying in a ditch somewhere without her coat, and she's cold and in pain," Beverly's friend Laurie Pentland told NBC Montana earlier this month.

Pentland was the one who alerted police to Beverly's absence, after her friend failed to show up to her house on Halloween to give her children candy.

"I'm sick to my stomach," she said. "I can't sleep, I can't eat. We have searched ditches, we've searched fields, we've searched garbage cans. Something is just horribly, horribly wrong."

"These people would never leave those animals behind," Howard said.

Greg returned to Deer Lodge four years ago after retiring from his career as a city engineer in Roseville, Calif. Acquaintances told the Standard that the 230-pound man with gray hair and hazel eyes largely kept to himself.

In the days of the mother-son's disappearance, confusion and speculation continued to mount as Deer Lodge residents awaited concrete news. The case is the subject of a 19-page thread on the Websleuths forum.

One strange twist involved a burglary at Greg's home on Nov. 2, one day after police searched the house. They found the flat-screen TV in the yard, clothing in bags and a cellphone as well as two weapons missing from the residence. Other items were scattered outside, as if the robber had been intercepted halfway through the heist.

It's not known whether the incident is related to the Giannonattis' disappearance and subsequent deaths, though theories abound.

Late last week, rumors surfaced that two bodies had been found, setting forth a new round of frenzy among those following the case.

But Gayle Mizner, an administrator of the Facebook page, swiftly quieted the whispers. "I have checked twice with the Sheriff and he assures me that this is not true," she wrote.

[Elahe Izadi contributed to this post, which has been updated.]

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Body of a courtesan in nine stages: A 19th century study of decomposition

strangerremains.com

By strangerremains on June 24, 2014 • (6)



Painting, handscroll. *Body of a courtesan in nine stages of decomposition*. Ink and colour on silk. Image credit: The British Museum

“Body of a Courtesan in Nine Stages” was painted on handscroll by Japanese artist Kobayashi Eitaku in the 1870’s. It’s not unusual for artists to study corpses and body parts because of their need to learn about the human form, and because of the historical connection between the science of anatomy and artistic illustration. What makes this style unique is that it’s part of a Japanese artistic tradition devoted specifically to

the study of human postmortem changes that stretches back hundreds of years.

“Body of a Courtesan in Nine Stages” is an example of *kusozu*, the illustration of a decomposing corpse, that was popular in Japanese art from about the 13th to 19th centuries.

Kusozu was inspired by Buddhist beliefs that urged followers to meditate on the temporary nature of life and the physical world by contemplating postmortem changes. The below panels illustrate nine stages of death that include: (1) dying; (2) newly deceased or fresh; (3) skin discoloration and bloat during early decomposition; (4) leakage of blood in early decomposition; (5) skin slippage, marbling, and leakage of purge fluid during early decomposition; (6) caving of abdominal cavity and exposure of internal organs during advanced decomposition; (7) animal scavenging during advanced decomposition; (8) skeletonization; and (9) extreme decomposition.

Though the painting maybe religious and/or scientific in nature, according to the British Museum it also has erotic themes. Because the subject matter is a courtesan, the curator notes for this piece at the British Museum say that this handscroll also falls into the genre of erotic art, or *shunga*. The word *shunga* means *picture of spring* in Japanese. The word “spring” is a common synonym for sex.

Below are all 9 panels. All images come from The British Museum.

6 replies

1. Brittius

June 24, 2014 • 1:59 am



AN00603867_001_1

Reblogged this on Brittius

2. Morgue

July 2, 2014 • 12:24 am

Interesting...and oddly accurate.

3. kathe lake

January 31, 2015 • 2:24 pm

I have been looking for these pictures all over the web, museums etc.. thanks.



18p65ca13gi7yjpg

4. kelciper

March 6, 2015 • 5:04 pm

Reblogged this on kelciper.

Trackbacks

1. Stadien der

Verwesung in der japanischen Kunst

Bestatterweblog Peter

WilhelmBestatterweblog

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Alexander Keith's bottle nearly as old as Canada discovered in Halifax waters

2015/11/26

cbc.ca

Jon Crouse was scuba diving in the Northwest Arm when he discovered a bottle dating back to 1870s, 1880s

By Brett Ruskin, CBC News Posted: Nov 26, 2015 9:31 AM AT Last Updated: Nov 26, 2015 10:03 AM AT



A Halifax man has found a beer bottle nearly as old as Canada, with century-old suds still inside.

Jon Crouse was scuba diving in the ocean waters of Nova Scotia's Northwest Arm during a rainstorm this week. The consummate collector of undersea objects shoved his arms into the silt on the floor of the Atlantic Ocean.

His hand hit the bottle, but at first, he didn't think he had found anything special.

"I've been looking for bottles since I started diving," Crouse said. "I've found quite a few vintage bottles."

The bottle he found Monday certainly fit that description.

Crouse has used markings on its bottom to trace its origins to a company that imported bottles to Canada from England between 1872 and 1890.



Jon Crouse holds the beer bottle he found while scuba diving this week in the Northwest Arm in Halifax. (CBC)

Ink on the preserved cork is visible through the glass mouth of the bottle, which reads: "A. Keith's Brewers." The Alexander Keith's Brewery opened in Halifax in 1820 and is one of the oldest commercial breweries in North America.

The most amazing aspect of the possibly more than 120-year-old bottle is what's inside — a bubbly liquid that could be beer.

"I never expected to find half a bottle of Keith's, if that is what it is," he said. "I hope it is."

Will he drink it? No.

It's going in the toilet. Sort of.

"I'll leave the bottle sitting in the top of the toilet tank," Crouse explained. "The frequent circulation of fresh water will eventually draw out all the salt from the cork."

"After about four months, I'll take the bottle, stand it upright, take some linseed oil and place a couple drops on top. As the water dries out it will be replaced by the linseed oil and that will hopefully preserve the cork," Crouse said.



This 125-year-old bottle of Keith's and has been under water for decades, and what is believed to be beer is still fizzy. (CBC)

"After having the cork preserved, hopefully over the span of a couple years the beer inside will evaporate naturally," Crouse said.

"Within a few years, this will hopefully be fully preserved without the liquid inside."

Experts agree that it may have been a tasty beer once, but would not be now.

"I don't think I'd be drinking it," said Steve Durand, current brewmaster at Alexander Keith's Brewery.

"That's one I'd probably just put on the shelf and admire it from afar."

One Halifax bar owner has expressed interest in paying to send the bottle to a lab for analysis.

"Certainly we have brewing records, recipes and archives we can look to to learn how brewers of the past made beer but the proof is in the pudding. It's more interesting I think to just analyze the actual thing," Chris Reynolds, who co-owns Stillwell Bar in Halifax, told CBC.

As for Crouse, he's still not done searching.

"The rarity of finding an old bottle makes it all that more special when you do find one," he said.

"So I'll just keep searching. You never know what you're going to find."

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Ink on the preserved cork is visible through the glass mouth of the bottle, which reads: 'A. Keith's Brewers.' (CBC)

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Boy lives chained up in church because mum think he's possessed by the devil

14:07, 22 Oct 2015 Updated 14:30, 22 Oct 2015 By Kara O'Neill

mirror.co.uk



Boy aged 12 kept chained up in a church because they thought he was possessed by the devil

A mum has kept her son chained up in a church to undergo an exorcism after becoming convinced he is possessed by the devil.

The child's mother Deisith Tapullima Sangama, from Tarapoto, Peru, told local media she was desperately worried about her son Dany, 12, after becoming convinced that he was possessed.

She said that he behaved like an animal for two years, could not speak, and would often run away for weeks at a time before he could be found and returned home.

She said: "I took him everywhere I could think of, but they always told me there was nothing they could do, and I should take him home and look after him.

"But what can I do with him there? Every year he is getting bigger and stronger, and it was clear it was only a matter of time before he was too much for me."



Exorcism: The boy has been living in the church while he undergoes an exorcism

She said that the last time he ran away four men had tried to restrain him without any success.

She said she then turned to help from the local religious congregation where he ended up being chained up next to the waste containers while members of the congregation gathered three times a day to pray for him.

And miraculously, his mother claims that slowly they are driving the demons away.

She said: "He can speak now, eat without throwing his food everywhere, and he's asking questions."

But she added that they still didn't think the boy was ready to be free, saying that during one recent relapse he snapped his padlock and had now been chained up again, this time with a stronger lock.



CEN

Improving: The boy's mother claims his behaviour is gradually getting better

Rosa Panduro who is the pastor at the evangelical church in La Banda de Shilcayo said: "We have prayer sessions for him three times a day.

"There are 25 people who have been helped in the same way, and we hoping to do the same for him.

"I have been doing this now for 17 years after God gave me my life back

and now I am repaying him by carrying out charitable acts in his name."

Those being treated include people with epilepsy and drug addiction problems.

Last week, a woman reported to be possessed by the devil let off blood-curdling screams as she was placed next to a glass cabinet of holy relics.

Comments

40 days ago

scoobysue

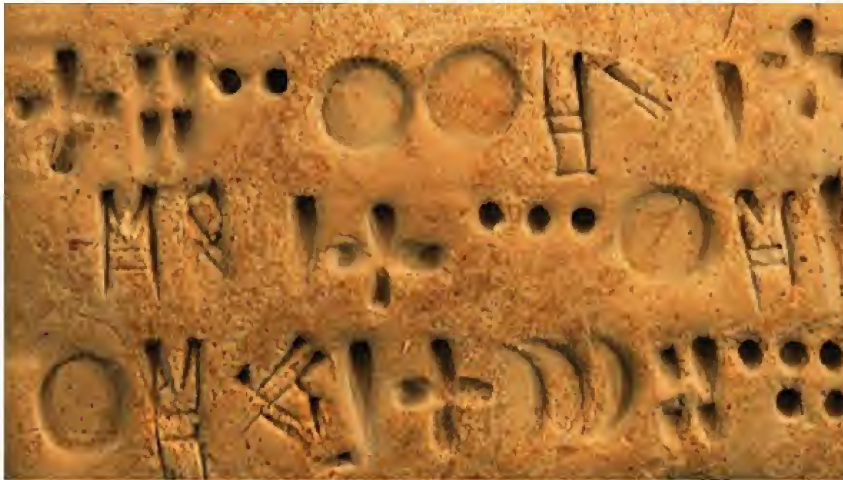
This is so scary in this day and age that there's people anywhere who believe in this mumbo jumbo

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Breakthrough in world's oldest undeciphered writing - BBC News bbc.com

By Sean Coughlan

• 25 October 2012



Experts working on proto-Elamite hope they are on the point of 'a breakthrough'

The world's oldest undeciphered writing system, which has so far defied attempts to uncover its 5,000-year-old secrets, could be about to be decoded by Oxford University academics.

This international research project is already casting light on a lost bronze age middle eastern society where enslaved workers lived on rations close to the starvation

level.

"I think we are finally on the point of making a breakthrough," says Jacob Dahl, fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford and director of the Ancient World Research Cluster.

Dr Dahl's secret weapon is being able to see this writing more clearly than ever before.

In a room high up in the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, above the Egyptian mummies and fragments of early civilisations, a big black dome is clicking away and flashing out light.

This device, part sci-fi, part-DIY, is providing the most detailed and high quality images ever taken of these elusive symbols cut into clay tablets. This is Indiana Jones with software.

This way of capturing images, developed by academics in Oxford and Southampton, is being used to help decode a writing system called proto-Elamite, used between around 3200BC and 2900BC in a region now in the south west of modern Iran.

And the Oxford team think that they could be on the brink of understanding this last great remaining cache of undeciphered texts from the ancient world.

Tablet computer

Dr Dahl, from the Oriental Studies Faculty, shipped his image-making device on the Eurostar to the Louvre Museum in Paris, which holds the most important collection of this writing.

Image caption

The clay tablets were put inside this machine, the Reflectance Transformation Imaging System, which uses a combination of 76 separate photographic lights and computer processing to capture every groove and notch on the surface of the clay tablets.

It allows a virtual image to be turned around, as though being held up to the light at every possible angle.

These images will be publicly available online, with the aim of using a kind of academic crowdsourcing.

He says it's misleading to think that codebreaking is about some lonely genius suddenly understanding the meaning of a word. What works more often is patient teamwork and the sharing of theories. Putting the images online should accelerate this process.

But this is painstaking work. So far Dr Dahl has deciphered 1,200 separate signs, but he says that after more than 10 years study much remains unknown, even such basic words as "cow" or "cattle".

He admits to being "bitten" by this challenge. "It's an unknown, uncharted territory of human history," he says.

Extinct language

But why has this writing proved so difficult to interpret?

Dr Dahl suspects he might have part of the answer. He's discovered that the original texts seem to contain many mistakes - and this makes it extremely tricky for anyone trying to find consistent patterns.

TABLET TECHNOLOGY

- Proto-Elamite is the name given to a writing system developed in an area that is now in south-western Iran
- It was adopted about 3200BC and was borrowed from neighbouring Mesopotamia
- It was written from right to left in wet clay tablets
- There are more than a thousand surviving tablets in this writing
- The biggest group of such texts was collected by 19th Century French archaeologists and brought back to the Louvre
- While other ancient writing, such as Egyptian hieroglyphics, Sumerian and Mesopotamian, have been deciphered - attempts with proto-Elamite have proved unsuccessful

He believes this was not just a case of the scribes having a bad day at the office. There seems to have been an unusual absence of scholarship, with no evidence of any lists of symbols or learning exercises for scribes to preserve the accuracy of the writing.

This first case of educational underinvestment proved fatal for the writing system, which was corrupted and then completely disappeared after only a couple of hundred years. "It's an

early example of a technology being lost," he says.

"The lack of a scholarly tradition meant that a lot of mistakes were made and the writing system may eventually have become useless."

Making it even harder to decode is the fact that it's unlike any other ancient writing style. There are no bi-lingual texts and few helpful overlaps to provide a key to these otherwise arbitrary looking dashes and circles and symbols.

This is a writing system - and not a spoken language - so there's no way of knowing how words sounded, which might have provided some phonetic clues.

Dr Dahl says that one of the really important historical significances of this proto-Elamite writing is that it was the first ever recorded case of one society adopting writing from another neighbouring group.

But infuriatingly for the codebreakers, when these proto-Elamites borrowed the concept of writing from the Mesopotamians, they made up an entirely different set of symbols.

Why they should make the intellectual leap to embrace writing and then at the same time re-invent it in a different local form remains a puzzle.

But it provides a fascinating snapshot of how ideas can both spread and change.

Mr One Hundred

In terms of written history, this is the very remote past. But there is also something very direct and almost intimate about it too.

You can see fingernail marks in the clay. These neat little symbols and drawings are clearly the work of an intelligent mind.

Image caption

These were among the first attempts by our human ancestors to try to make a permanent record of their surroundings. What we're doing now - my writing and your reading - is a direct continuation.

But there are glimpses of their lives to suggest that these were tough times. It wasn't so much a land of milk and honey, but porridge and weak beer.

Even without knowing all the symbols, Dr Dahl says it's possible to work out the context of many of the messages on these tablets.

The numbering system is also understood, making it possible to see that much of this information is about accounts of the ownership and yields from land and people. They are about property and status, not poetry.

This was a simple agricultural society, with a ruling household. Below them was a tier of

powerful middle-ranking figures and further below were the majority of workers, who were treated like "cattle with names".

Their rulers have titles or names which reflect this status - the equivalent of being called "Mr One Hundred", he says - to show the number of people below him.

It's possible to work out the rations given to these farm labourers.

Dr Dahl says they had a diet of barley, which might have been crushed into a form of porridge, and they drank weak beer.

The amount of food received by these farm workers hovered barely above the starvation level.

However the higher status people might have enjoyed yoghurt, cheese and honey. They also kept goats, sheep and cattle.

For the "upper echelons, life expectancy for some might have been as long as now", he says. For the poor, he says it might have been as low as in today's poorest countries.

The tablets also have surprises. Even though there are plenty of pictures of animals and mythical creatures, Dr Dahl says there are no representations of the human form of any kind. Not even a hand or an eye.

Was this some kind of cultural or religious taboo?

Dr Dahl remains passionate about what this work says about such societies, digging into the deepest roots of civilisation. This is about where so much begins. For instance, proto-Elamite was the first writing ever to use syllables.

If Macbeth talked about the "last syllable of recorded time", the proto-Elamites were there for the first.

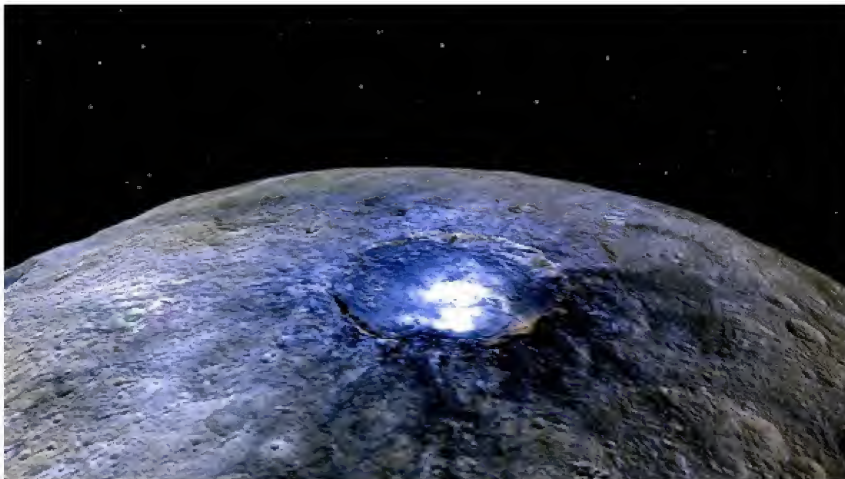
And with sufficient support, Dr Dahl says that within two years this last great lost writing could be fully understood.

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Mysterious bright spots on Ceres are probably salt

09 December 2015

nature.com



NASA/JPL-Caltech/UCLA/MPS/DLR/IDA The brightest spots on Ceres lie within Occator Crater, shown here.

Expand

The verdict is in — mostly. The bright spots on the dwarf planet Ceres are probably made of salt, NASA's Dawn spacecraft has found.

Mixed with the salt are bits of rock and frozen water. When sunlight hits the blend, the ice sublimates into a misty haze above two of Ceres's craters, researchers report in the 10 December issue of *Nature*.



Nature Special: Pluto and Ceres

But mission scientists are not sure how the salt, ice and haze are interlinked. "The whole picture we do not have yet," says Andreas Nathues, a planetary scientist at the Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research in Goettingen, Germany, and the paper's lead author¹.

Dawn has also found ammonia-rich clays on Ceres, a second *Nature* paper reports². Ammonia is more common in the frigid outer Solar System than in the asteroid belt where Ceres reigns. The discovery suggests that Ceres may have collected bits of outer Solar System material — or even that it was born near Neptune before migrating

inward.

Both papers are the first major published results from Dawn. The spacecraft, which launched in 2007, visited the asteroid Vesta in 2011–12 and arrived at Ceres in March.

Outlook hazy

At 950 kilometres across, Ceres is not only the largest asteroid in the Solar System, but also a protoplanet whose origin and evolution may help researchers to better understand how other planets formed. Scientists previously calculated that roughly one-quarter of Ceres is water, which may lurk as an icy shell beneath the dwarf planet's dark surface.

The bright spots are the first direct glimpse of that underground ice. Dawn has catalogued more than 130 such spots, most of them within impact craters. The brightest lies in the 90.5-kilometre-wide Occator Crater, and the second-brightest is in the 10-kilometre-wide Oxo Crater. (Features on Ceres are named after agricultural deities.)



NASA/JPL-Caltech/UCLA/MPS/DLR/IDA Haze hovers over Occator Crater.

Expand

Dawn spotted haze only in Occator and Oxo, Nathues says. The spacecraft's camera captured it glimmering beneath the rims of the craters in the morning sun, then vanishing by afternoon. The haze probably forms when sunlight warms the surface, causing ice to sublimate and carry dust and ice particles upward. When the surface cools, the sublimation ceases and the haze disappears. In 2014, researchers analysing measurements made by the Herschel Space Observatory reported water vapour in the atmosphere of Ceres near Occator³.

Some kind of geological process seems to continually feed ice to the surface, replenishing what is lost, Nathues says. Occator and Oxo are both relatively young craters, and the other bright spots on Ceres might represent older impacts where outgassing has stopped.

Dawn will never be able to spot the haze again. The spacecraft could only photograph it from an oblique angle as it first approached Ceres.

Nathues' team also looked at spectra of light reflecting off the bright spots. Those measurements suggest that the spots contain salt, which is most likely to be a type of magnesium sulfate.

Basic questions

In the second study, other Dawn scientists reported finding ammonia bound up in clay minerals across the dark surface. Scientists had reported hints of ammonia on Ceres before, based on ground-based spectral studies⁴, but these data could also be interpreted as coming from other minerals, says Andrew Rivkin, a planetary scientist at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland.

The new spectra confirm the presence of ammonia. Normally ammonia is found far out in the outer Solar System, beyond Neptune, says team leader Maria Christina De Sanctis, an astronomer at the Istituto di Astrofisica e Planetologia Spaziali in Rome.

One possibility is that ammonia-rich space rocks fell onto Ceres, which was large enough to have sufficient heat from its radioactive interior to partially melt and process the debris into ammoniated clays, says Carol Raymond, a planetary scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, and deputy principal investigator on Dawn. "That's a pretty nice story," she says.

Many questions remain. De Sanctis and her colleagues are analysing new spectral data on the bright spots, which may support or rule out the presence of salts. "It's really enticing," she says.

Dawn is currently spiralling down to its final mapping orbit, which it will reach on or before 18 December. From there it will study Ceres from a distance of about 385 kilometres until the mission runs out of money to operate the spacecraft or it can no longer point itself in the right direction.

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Britain's oldest family Christmas tree goes up for 95th year

15:45, 11 Dec 2015 Updated 15:48, 11 Dec 2015 By Paul Byrne

mirror.co.uk



SWNS

Spruced up: Kay Ashton with her 1920's Christmas tree.

It has survived Hitler's bombs and killer storms and now one family's Christmas tree has gone up for its 95th year.

The artificial spruce, bought from Woolworths in 1920, has been passed down through two generations.

And proud Kaye Ashton, 61, is still decorating the much-loved family heirloom.

She said: "It's a great piece of history and I'm so glad to have it.

"The branches are getting a bit delicate but as long as you're careful with it, it's still a wonderful decoration.

"To think, the tree has stayed the same for almost 100 years but everything around it has changed so much. The things it will have seen."

Grandmother Kaye added: "I've kept all the original decorations - both those and the tree itself are so robust.

"I'm sure it will outlive me and go on for many more decades.

Read more: Have you seen the Downing Street Christmas Tree? It's HUGE!

"I feel like I have to take great care of it, because there's this tradition of passing it down the generations of girls in our family.

"It's outlived two generations and even the shop it was bought from, so it's obviously made of strong stuff.

"It takes pride of place in my living room although I do have a main tree as well because it's down to just over one foot tall now."

The tree was first bought by Kaye's grandmother Elizabeth Naylor in 1920 who named it William's tree to mark her newborn son's first Christmas that year.

He sadly died prematurely in 1940 aged 19 and the tree became a treasured family memorial to him.



SWNS

Baubles: The tree still has its original decorations

Elizabeth - known as Nanan - died in 1981 aged 80 and the tree was inherited by her daughter, Joyce Ashton.

When Joyce died in 2012 Kaye became the third generation to own it.

Kaye, from Sheffield, South Yorks, said: "My Nanan always had the tree in the kitchen. It was the only tree she ever had.

"During the Sheffield Blitz in the Christmas of 1941 they'd been warned to leave the house, but instead the whole family went down into the cellar.

"My Nanan had put a heavy wrought iron mangle against the back door to keep it closed.

"But when a bomb was dropped across the road, the force blew the back door open, and the mangle went flying across the room and into the tree.

"When they came back upstairs, the living room was a mess - with the tree lying in the middle of it.

"The top of it had nearly come off and it's been bent ever since, but it was fixed with Sellotape and wire. Some of the original bits of tape are still on the tree and I daren't take them off.

"Then in 1962, Sheffield was hit by awful gales, people were even killed when buildings collapsed.

Read more: 3ft Woolworths tree is 78 years old and still has original decorations

"I remember being at my Nanan's house and she asked my mother to close the back door.

"But before we knew, it, the tree had gone flying across the room and almost into the fire.

"The tree had taken another battering but it still did the job at Christmas.

"My Nanan took great care with the tree and its decorations, and to this day I'll only decorate William's tree with the original decoration she used.

"I've taken a leaf out of my nanan's book and I wrap the decorations in bubble wrap when they're not in use."

Kaye, a customer service advisor, has two daughters, Amy Wilcox, 43, and Rebecca Goodhand, 36, to keep up the family tradition.

Kaye added: "I think my Nanan would be really touched to know the tree is still going strong and being used - and so would William.

"We'll definitely have to have a party when it reaches 100. It's amazing to think it's lived through so much. I can't imagine it not being around."

Kaye's heirloom beats another long-lasting Woolworth's tree. The Mirror revealed yesterday that Derek Parker was still using the artificial tree and decorations bought by his mum 78 years ago.

- Is your tree more than 95 years old? Call the newsdesk free on 0800 282 5910800 282 591 FREE or email mirrornews@mirror.co.uk

DailyMirror

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Murderous pigs sent to the gallows, sparrows prosecuted for chattering in church, a gang of thieving rats let off on a wholly technical acquittal – theoretical psychologist and author Nicholas Humphrey* explores the strange world of medieval animal trials.



Detail from frontispiece of *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* (1906) by E.P. Evans

On 5 March 1986 some villagers near Malacca in Malaysia beat to death a dog, which they believed was one of a gang of thieves who transform themselves into animals to carry out their crimes. The story was reported on the front page of the *London Financial Times*. “When a dog bites a man,” it is said, “that’s not news; but when a man bites a dog, that is news”.

Such stories, however, are apparently not news for very long. Indeed the most extraordinary examples of people taking retribution against animals seem to have been almost totally forgotten. A few years ago I lighted on a book, first published in 1906, with the surprising title

The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals by E.P. Evans, author of *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture*, *Bugs and Beasts before the Law*, etc., etc. The frontispiece showed an engraving of a pig, dressed up in a jacket and breeches, being strung up on a gallows in the market square of a town in Normandy in 1386; the pig had been formally tried and convicted of murder by the local court. When I borrowed the book from the Cambridge University Library, I showed this picture of the pig to the librarian. “Is it a joke?”, she asked.

No, it was not a joke. All over Europe, throughout the middle-ages and right on into the 19th century, animals were, as it turns out, tried for human crimes. Dogs, pigs, cows, rats and even flies and caterpillars were arraigned in court on charges ranging from murder to obscenity. The trials were conducted with full ceremony: evidence was heard on both sides, witnesses were called, and in many cases the accused animal was granted a form of legal aid — a lawyer being appointed at the tax-payer’s expense to conduct the animal’s defence.

In 1494, for example, near Clermont in France a young pig was arrested for having “strangled and defaced a child in its cradle”. Several witnesses were examined, who testified that “on the morning of Easter Day, the infant being left alone in its cradle, the said pig entered during the said time the said house and disfigured and ate the face and neck of the said child .. which in consequence departed this life.” Having weighed up the evidence and found no extenuating circumstances, the judge gave sentence:

We, in detestation and horror of the said crime, and to the end that an example may be made and justice maintained, have said, judged, sentenced, pronounced and appointed that the said porker, now detained as a prisoner and confined in

the said abbey, shall be by the master of high works hanged and strangled on a gibbet of wood.

Evans' book details more than two hundred such cases: sparrows being prosecuted for chattering in Church, a pig executed for stealing a communion wafer, a cock burnt at the stake for laying an egg. As I read my eyes grew wider and wider. Why did no one tell us this at school? Why were we taught so many dreary facts of history at school, and not taught these?



Illustration entitled 'Trial of a Sow and Pigs at Lavegny' taken from The Book of Days (1863) edited by Robert Chambers

We all know how King Canute attempted to stay the tide at Lambeth; but who has heard, for example, of the solemn threats made against the tides of locusts which threatened to engulf the countryside of France and Italy? The Pied Piper, who charmed the rats from Hamelin is a part of legend; but who has heard of Bartholomew Chassenée, a French jurist of the sixteenth century, who made his reputation at the bar as the defence counsel for some rats? The rats had been put on trial in the ecclesiastical court on the charge of having

“feloniously eaten up and wantonly destroyed” the local barley. When the culprits did not in fact turn up in court on the appointed day, Chassenée made use of all his legal cunning to excuse them. They had, he urged in the first place, probably not received the summons since they moved from village to village; but even if they had received it they were probably too frightened to obey, since as everyone knew they were in danger of being set on by their mortal enemies the cats. On this point Chassenée addressed the court at some length, in order to show that if a person be cited to appear at a place to which he cannot come in safety, he may legally refuse. The judge, recognising the justice of this claim, but being unable to persuade the villagers to keep their cats indoors, was obliged to let the matter drop.

For an animal found guilty, the penalty was dire. The Normandy pig, depicted in the frontispiece of the Evans book, was charged with having torn the face and arms of a baby in its cradle. The pig was sentenced to be “mangled and maimed in the head forelegs”, and then – dressed up in a jacket and breeches – to be hung from a gallows in the market square.

But, as we have seen with Chassenée's rats, the outcome of these trials was not inevitable. In doubtful cases the courts appear in general to have been lenient, on the principle of “innocent until proved guilty beyond reasonable doubt”. In 1587, a gang of weevils, accused of damaging a vineyard, were deemed to have been exercising their natural rights to eat – and, in compensation, were granted a vineyard of their own. In 1457 a sow was convicted of murder and sentenced to be “hanged by the hind feet from a gallows tree”. Her six piglets, being found stained with blood, were included in the indictment as accomplices. But no

evidence was offered against them, and on account of their tender age they were acquitted. In 1750 a man and a she-ass were taken together in an act of buggery. The prosecution asked for the death sentence for both of them. After due process of law the man was sentenced, but the animal was let off on the ground that she was the victim of violence and had not participated in her master's crime of her own free-will. The local priest gave evidence that he had known the said she-ass for four years, that she had always shown herself to be virtuous and well-behaved, that she had never given occasion of scandal to anyone, and that therefore he was "willing to bear witness that she is in word and deed and in all her habits of life a most honest creature."

Hist. de Nîmes. Mémoires, cit., viii, p. 428.	1479	Rats and Moles	Nîmes
Louandre : Hist. d'Abbeville	1479	Pig	Abbeville
Chasseneus : Consilia von Amira, p. 561	1481	Caterpillars	Macon
Victor Hugo: Notre Dame de Paris	1482	Goat	Paris
Chasseneus : Consilia. Mémoires, cit., viii, p. 416	1487	Snails	Macon

Detail from a page in the Appendix of *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* (1906) by E.P. Evans

What was the purpose of these lengthy and extravagant procedures? A desire for revenge cannot have been the only motive. Evans cites cases of inanimate objects being brought before the law. In Greece, a statue that fell on a man was charged with murder and sentenced to be thrown into the sea; in Russia, a bell that peeled too gleefully on the occasion of the assassination of a prince was charged with treason and exiled to Siberia.

The protection of society cannot have been the only motive either. Evans tells of the bodies of criminals, already dead, being brought to trial. Pope Stephen VI, on his accession in 896, accused his predecessor, Formosus, of sacrilegiously bringing the papal office into disrepute. The body of the dead pope was exhumed, dressed in the pontifical robes and set up on a throne in St. Peter's, where a deacon was appointed to defend him. When the verdict of guilty was pronounced, the executioner thrust Formosus from the throne, stripped him of his robes, cut off the three benedictory fingers of his right hand and threw his body "as a pestilential thing" into the Tiber.

Taken together, Evans' cases suggest that again and again, the true purpose of the trials was psychological. People were living at times of deep uncertainty. Both the Greeks and medieval Europeans had in common a deep fear of lawlessness: not so much fear of laws being contravened, as the much worse fear that the world they lived in might not be a lawful place at all. A statue fell on a man out of the blue, a pig killed a baby while its mother was at mass, swarms of locusts appeared from nowhere and devastated the crops, the Holy See was becoming riddled with corruption. At first sight such misfortunes can have appeared to have no rhyme or reason to them. To an extent that we today cannot find easy to conceive, these people of the pre-scientific era lived every day at the edge of explanatory darkness. No wonder if, like Einstein in the twentieth century, they were terrified of the real possibility that "God was playing dice with the universe".

The same anxiety has indeed continued to pervade more modern minds. Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov, having declared that "Everything is permitted", concluded that were his thesis to be generally acknowledged "every living force on which all life depends would dry up at once". Alexander Pope claimed that "order is heaven's first law". And Yeats drew a grim picture of a lawless world:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

Yet the natural universe, lawful as it may in fact have always been, was never in all respects self-evidently lawful. And people's need to believe that it was so, their faith in determinism, that everything was not permitted, that the centre did hold, had to be continually confirmed by the success of their attempts at explanation.

So the law courts, on behalf of society, took matters into their own hands. Just as today, when things are unexplained, we expect the institutions of science to put the facts on trial, one can see the whole purpose of the legal actions as being to establish cognitive control. In other words, the job of the courts was to domesticate chaos, to impose order on a world of accidents — and specifically to make sense of certain seemingly inexplicable events by redefining them as crimes.

I read some years ago another report in a London newspaper:

A jilted woman who attempted suicide by leaping from a 12th floor window but landed on and killed a street salesman has been charged with manslaughter. Prosecutors in Taipei, Taiwan said 21-year-old Ho Yu-Mei was responsible for the death of the food salesman because she failed to make sure that there was no one below when she jumped. Ho had argued that she thought the man would have moved away by the time she hit the ground. She also said she had threatened earlier to sue the salesman because "he interfered" with her freedom to take her own life. If convicted, Ho could be imprisoned for two years.

Who says that the medieval obsession with responsibility has gone away? But it was with dogs as criminals I began, and with dogs as criminals I'll end. A story in The Times some years ago told how a dead dog had been thrown by an unknown hand from the roof of a skyscraper in Johannesburg, had landed on a man and flattened him — the said man having in consequence departed this life. The headline read — oh, how un-newsworthy! — DOG KILLS MAN. I wonder what Chassenée or E.P.Evans would have made of that.

Nicholas Humphrey is a theoretical psychologist, based in Cambridge, who is known for his work on the evolution of human intelligence and consciousness. His interests are wide ranging. He studied mountain gorillas with Dian Fossey in Rwanda, he was the first to demonstrate the existence of "blindsight" after brain damage in monkeys, he proposed the celebrated theory of the "social function of intellect, and he is the only scientist ever to edit the literary journal Granta. His many books include Consciousness Regained, A History of the

Mind, Leaps of Faith, The Mind Made Flesh and most recently *Soul Dust*. He has been the recipient of several honours, including the Martin Luther King Memorial Prize, the Pufendorf medal and the British Psychological Society's book award.

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Links to Public Domain Works

- *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* by E.P.Evans (1906)
 - txt
 - pdf online
 - pdf download
- *The Trials of Animals and Insects* by Hampton Carlson, article in American Philosophical Transactions (1917)
 - pdf online

Further Reading

Strange Histories: The Trial of the Pig, the Walking Dead, and Other Matters of Fact from the Medieval and Renaissance Worlds (2004, Routledge)

by Darren Oldridge.

A serious account of some of the most extraordinary occurrences of European and North American history and explains how they made sense to people living at the time.

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Burglary suspect hiding in pond killed by 11-foot alligator, authorities say

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*Booking photo of Matthew Riggins.*

© Brevard County Sheriff's Office Booking photo of Matthew Riggins. ORLANDO, Fla. _ A 22-year-old burglary suspect trying to evade authorities was killed by an 11-foot alligator last month, the Brevard County Sheriff's Office said.

Deputies said Matthew Riggins drowned as a result of the gator attack. He was missing his lower extremities and part of an arm, according to deputies.

Riggins and another man were in Barefoot Bay to commit house burglaries in the late evening hours of Nov. 12 and early morning hours of Nov. 13. A resident called deputies around 2 a.m. to say the two men, dressed in black, were walking behind houses near Tequesta Drive.

Riggins and the other man were spotted on Royal Palm Boulevard, but they fled.

A K-9 and helicopter search were unsuccessful.

According to deputies, Riggins called his girlfriend to say he was being chased by authorities.

Riggins was reported missing later on Nov. 13 after he didn't come home.

His body was found in a Barefoot Bay lake just north of Ocean Avenue Way on Nov. 23.

While sheriff dive team members were recovering Riggins' body, they encountered a large gator "aggressively approaching" them.

The gator was trapped by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and euthanized.

"A forensic examination of the alligator located remains consistent with the injuries to Riggins inside the alligator's stomach," deputies said.

The other man who was with Riggins has been identified, but is not cooperating with the investigation. Deputies didn't say if he was charged.

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NEW YORK, N. Y., July 1.—Mrs. Augusta Nack, who is under arrest in connection with the murder of the man supposed to be William Guldensuppe, spent the night at police headquarters. She insists that Guldensuppe has not been murdered and that he will turn up before long. Mrs. Nack slept well all night. She insisted that she saw Guldensuppe on Saturday afternoon two hours after the first portion of the body was found.

The detectives are still continuing their investigations of the matter and making vigorous search for the man who supplanted Guldensuppe in Mrs. Nack's affections. There is considerable skepticism among the police as to the murdered man being Guldensuppe, notwithstanding the positive identification of the deformed finger by ten of the missing man's friends.

Dr. Cosby, four attendants from the bathhouse and an unknown called at the Morgue to-day and positively identified the legs found as those of Guldensuppe.

Every effort is being made to extort an admission from Mrs. Nack that she has knowledge of the murder of Guldensuppe. She was subjected to a physical examination by police station matrons this afternoon, after which it was asserted that her person showed marks that indicated that within a few days she had been engaged in a hard struggle. During the examination Mrs. Nack is said to have been almost hysterical and to have nearly broken down several times.

The Cane That Struck Against Slavery

For Eight Years, Congress Refused to Hear Petitions on Abolition. John Quincy Adams Received This Gift in Recognition of His Battle Against the ‘Gag Rule.’



The Cane That Struck Against Slavery

By Harry R. Rubenstein

The history of American democracy is often best revealed not in the nation's founding documents, but in the activism and struggles of countless

individuals to create a more perfect union. Held within the Smithsonian's vast collections is a 3-foot-long ivory cane made from a single elephant tusk, topped off with a gold-inlaid American eagle grasping a scroll. It is a treasured and curious memento from one of these struggles—the battle to preserve one of the most basic rights of citizens, the right to debate and protest.

In developing the exhibition *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith*, which will open—mark your calendars—July Fourth weekend, 2016, we want to explore some of the most elemental debates and issues that have confronted the founding revolutionary generation and that resonate to this day. Americans have viewed the right to petition—which plays out in our right to debate openly, lobby government officials, and mount Internet letter-writing campaigns—as a very basic democratic right. We've continued to exercise it to shape our country beyond the ballot box. We may take it for granted today (see this petition to start construction on a *Star Wars*-inspired Death Star by 2016), but it was under serious attack in the 19th century. Americans in the formative years of the country clashed over the most limited aspirations of its founding documents and helped define the practical meaning of democracy.

The elegant cane was presented to Massachusetts Congressman John Quincy Adams—the former president—in March 1844, by Henry Ellsworth, commissioner of the U.S. Patent Office. It featured Adams' name and the Latin words *Justum et tenacem propositi virum* ("A man just and firm of purpose") on a band below the knob. This was not a cane that served any practical purpose, but rather was a ceremonial object, a trophy to recognize Adams for his role in the ongoing battle to abolish slavery. The cane was a gift from Julius Pratt and Co. of Meriden, Connecticut, one of the country's leading importers of ivory. Pratt, an active

abolitionist, asked Ellsworth to present the cane to Adams to honor him for his long campaign to defend the right to protest the institution of slavery and his battle against what had become known as the House of Representatives "gag rule" covering all anti-slavery petitions.

The idea of a gag rule on petitions presented to Congress on any subject seemed a contradiction and assault on the very idea of democratic government. It was an ancient privilege that dated back to the rights of subjects to petition kings and lords to redress grievances or ask for favor. The First Amendment of the Constitution established that Congress shall make no law restricting "the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Not limiting their participation to electoral politics, individuals and groups with very different resources brought their interests and concerns before the nation: on the streets, in back rooms, and through the media of their times. In the early American republic, petitioning provided disenfranchised poor white men, women, free blacks, and other minorities a means to voice their concerns and to claim a role in determining the direction of the country.

Pratt requested that when Adams successfully defeated the rule, he add the date of his victory to the inscription. Adams wrote in his diary, "I accepted the cane as a trust to be returned when the date of the extinction of the gag-rule shall be accomplished," and asked Ellsworth to keep the cane until that time.

The campaign to defeat the gag rule had become a major symbolic focus of the revitalized abolitionist movement. In an effort to promote a national debate on slavery, abolitionists had organized petitioning drives in the 1830s, calling on Congress to prohibit slavery in the nation's capital, the one undisputed area the legislature controlled. Traditionally, petitions to the House of Representatives were presented individually and then assigned to the appropriate committee, which would recommend action. Southern representatives and their Northern allies argued that giving even this much attention to the subject served to heighten regional tensions and to promote violent slave rebellions. To cut off the abolitionists' efforts, the House of Representatives adopted on May 25, 1836, a resolution that all petitions, resolutions, and memorials regarding slavery or abolition would be tabled without being read, referred on, or printed.

This original gag rule, which under the rules of the House of Representatives needed to be reaffirmed with each new session of Congress, and was, for roughly eight years, was denounced as an infringement of the First Amendment. Rather than discouraging petitioners, it actually energized the movement of those who argued that the suppression of debate was yet another example of the willingness of slave-holding Southern politicians to trample on the rights of all Americans so as to preserve their so-called "peculiar institution." Abolitionists promised that the gag rule "shall be a 'firebrand' in our hands to light anew the flame of human sympathy and public indignation."

Petitions from anti-slavery societies flooded the Capitol, thanks in large measure to the growing activism of women. The anti-slavery groups found additional support outside the movement from sympathizers who questioned how a democratic society could exist if people's voices and debates were censored on the most central issues of the day.

The petitioners found a champion for their cause in Adams, who had returned to Congress in 1831. Year after year, Adams introduced anti-slavery petitions and railed against the gag rule. He argued that the refusal to accept the petitions was “beneath the dignity of the General Legislative Assembly of a nation, founding its existence upon natural and inalienable rights of man.” Each time, the House voted against his resolutions. The growing petitioning drives found popular support across the North and West, created mounting political pressure. On December 3, 1844, in a vote of 108-80, the gag rule was abolished.

Although this might seem like a small victory in the history to end slavery, at the time the vote was viewed as a major defeat for the South, a recognition that its power over Congress wasn't absolute. And indeed, the feeling that their institutions were now under attack by significant hostile political forces helped to fuel a burgeoning Southern secessionist movement in the following decades.

The anti-slavery petitioning drives of the 1830s and '40s strengthened the abolitionist movement and served as a training ground for future women's and civil rights struggles in the years that followed. They also helped challenge and redefine the meaning of American democracy and the unfulfilled promises in the nation's founding ideals, asserting the principle that beyond the ballot box, citizens have a role in shaping the debate and policies of their government.

Following Adams' victory, Ellsworth had engraved on the scroll above the eagle “Right of Petition Triumphant” and sent it on to Adams for him to add the date. On the tips of the eagle's wings, Adams asked a jeweler to add “3 December” and “1844.” Adams, who normally refused gifts from political supporters, returned the cane to the Patent Office. In his will, Adams bequeathed it to the United States, and the Patent Office later transferred it to the Smithsonian.

Soon it will be on display, as an evocative—if not as well-known—icon of American democracy as the Constitution itself.

Harry R. Rubenstein is chair of and a curator in the Division of Political History at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

Primary Editor: Jia-Rui Cook. Secondary Editor: Andrés Martinez.
Photos courtesy of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.



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Case of the Month: Eric Haider

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Eric Haider

Case of the Month: Eric Haider from Bismarck, North Dakota, who went missing from his job site on May 24, 2012. Eric was only 30 years old and he left behind a huge circle of friends and a heartbroken family including a young daughter.

Eric Haider worked for a company called Cofell's Plumbing and Heating. At the time that he went missing in 2012, Eric was working on a job site east of the Baker Hughes building in Dickinson, ND. In 2015, human remains, later determined to be his, were found about half a mile southwest of that particular job site. The remains were found in a 6-foot deep hole at a construction site in Dickinson, ND.

After Eric disappeared, the authorities received many tips from the public but none led to leads that they could use to solve the case of this missing man. People wondered whether Eric Haider had walked away from his life and his job. This was most unlikely. The possessions that he left did not indicate that he had planned to disappear. He was also father to a young daughter.



Eric Haider FB Missing Poster

Suggestions were raised that Eric was killed by accident. Was he hit with machinery on the job site? Do we know what type of machines were used that day that could have caused his death? If this indeed happened it would be likely that people saw and knew about this. If so, why didn't anyone come forward especially those in charge of the machine if it was accidental? How did they know they need not call an ambulance? Could Eric have been hit and then buried somewhere to cover up his accidental death? Was the company properly insured for these events? Did Eric have any enemies who saw an opportunity to kill and bury him on a work site hoping that the final construction would forever hide his final resting place?

Eric Haider's friends thought that it was "*a job site accident*" and that Eric was buried at the construction site "*likely inadvertently*." That however does not seem to match with the way his remains were found. The remains found were crouched down in an upright position as if Eric was sitting down pulling up his knees and hugging them with his arm. This would almost be a "protective child position." Maybe I misunderstand the "*crouched upright position*" so if anyone can elaborate on that, I'd appreciate it.

The authorities started an excavation site in the area at the construction site where Eric Haider was working the day that he disappeared. According to his friends, they were not looking in the right spot. "*There was a witness who said the area where (authorities) dug was not the same location where they were working that day.*" This makes me curious about the possible use of cadaver dogs. If anyone knows they were used, please let me know.

On May 22, 2015, human remains were found. They were *“relatively intact and found in the crouched upright position near an underground utility pipeline”* according to a statement released by Dickinson Police Capt. Joe Cianni.

“A positive identification of the body was not possible at the scene due to the extent of the decomposition of the body and the deterioration of the related clothing,” Cianni’s statement read. *“Nothing unusual or suspicious was unearthed during the exhumation.”*

The remains were later indeed identified as Eric Haider’s based on his medical records, his distinguishable tattoos, and the personal effects found in the clothing that was still on the body. The cause of death was undetermined.

It was said that forensic medical examinations would continue and that further information would be released as soon as it became available from the North Dakota State Forensic Medical Examiner’s Office.

The full press release from the Dickinson police reads as follows:

“Today the Dickinson Police Department received notification from the North Dakota State Forensic Medical Examiner’s Office that a positive identification of the human remains exhumed on Friday, May 22, 2015, in the area of 40 ST E and 4 Ave E, in Dickinson, ND, has been made. The body has been determined to be that of 30yoa Eric C. Haider, missing since Saturday, May 24, 2012. Positive identification was made possible through medical records, distinguishable tattoos, and personal effects found in clothing associated with the body. The actual cause of death has not been determined at this point. The forensic medical examination will continue and further information will be released as it becomes available from the North Dakota State Forensic Medical Examiner’s Office. No other questions will be answered at this time.”

Detective Kylan Klauzer

From the papers: *“Haider’s mother, Maryellen Suchan, told Rapid City, S.D., TV station KOTA that her son’s body was well preserved, and his wallet and cellphone were found on the body.”*

Some more of my thoughts about this strange case:

A: I’d like to know whether Eric Haider’s wallet has been tested for (touch) DNA. Leather can be tested with the M-Vac.

B: Did digital forensics find anything on the cell phone that can shed a light on his disappearance?

C: Eric was found in a “crouched upright position.” If he did so himself he was most likely under threat to do so. If he was placed in that position after dying his clothes should be checked with the M-Vac to see if touch DNA was left by those who placed him in that position.

D: I am also curious about his lung and stomach content (debris, etc.) that could give us more information about the manner in which he died.

E: the width of the hole could give us clues about materials used to dig that hole. What were the surroundings like?

This case raises so many questions. We may have found Eric's remains but we are not nearly done with this investigation.

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In the series "*Case of the Month*" I highlight cold cases. These posts are not an in-depth analysis and of course, sometimes more information can be found online and in newspaper archives. The goal of these posts is to get the cases back in the spotlights, to get people talking again, and if anything to make sure that we do not forget the victims. Just because their cases are cold does not mean that we can forget about them.

If you have any thoughts about the Eric Haider case I encourage you to post them on your own social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, etc. Every time that we mention Eric's name online we enhance his digital footprint.

We must make sure that Eric retains a web presence if we ever wish to find answers in his case. You can help by linking to or sharing this post.

Thank you for remembering Eric Haider with us.

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Casting Light on the Darkening of Colors in Historical Paintings

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The degradation of colors in historical paintings affects our cultural heritage in both museums and archeological sites. Despite intensive experimental studies, the origin of darkening of one of the most ancient pigments known to humankind, vermilion (α -HgS), remains unexplained. Here, by combining many-body theoretical spectroscopy and high-resolution microscopic x-ray diffraction, we clarify the composition of the damaged paint work and demonstrate possible physicochemical processes, induced by illumination and exposure to humidity and air, that cause photoactivation of the original pigment and the degradation of the secondary minerals. The results suggest a new path for the darkening process which was never considered by previous studies and prompt a critical examination of their findings.

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Many archeological sites, cathedral wall paintings, and famous masterpieces from major painters are affected by a slow, irreversible, light-induced degradation of pigments. Well-known examples of such phenomena are the discoloration of "chrome yellow," the pigment mostly favored by Van Gogh, and the darkening of vermilion, the red bright pigment also known as the mineral cinnabar (mercury sulfide, α -HgS), favored by Rubens and Italian masters and present in archeological sites worldwide. In spite of intensive experimental studies [1–7], the complex physicochemical processes underlying the degradation of vermilion remain a mystery. Factors such as light, impurities, humidity, and exposure to air are known to play a role [1], but the reasons behind their importance and the way they interconnect are not understood.

Vermilion degradation manifests through the appearance of gray or black layers, often accompanied by whitish streaks. Besides cinnabar, a number of secondary compounds have been detected in degraded samples through x-ray absorption near-edge spectroscopy, Raman, and microscopy [2–7]: these include corderoite (α -Hg₃S₂Cl₂), calomel (Hg₂Cl₂), and mercuric chloride (HgCl₂), although the presence of the latter seems to depend strongly on the sample investigated. Notably absent from these studies is the black polymorph of cinnabar, metacinnabar (β -HgS), as ruled out by the most recent experimental findings [3–5]. Instead, some studies have suggested that metallic Hg is responsible for the dark luster [2,3,8], but its presence is highly controversial, due to the difficulty in observing crystalline elemental mercury.

In this Letter, by combining *ab initio* theoretical spectroscopy and high-resolution microscopic x-ray diffraction, we clarify the composition of the degraded areas of the paintings and propose a thorough and coherent model that explains the microscopic origin of the combined effects of exposure to light, humidity, and air on the photoactivation and degradation of the layers. The need for a many-particle description of the excitation levels, band gaps, and optical spectra is demonstrated. While none of the compounds involved in such transformation is intrinsically gray or black, simultaneous processes of chemical origin (like photoreductive dissolution) and physical origin (structural instabilities) are activated and give rise to deposition of dark elemental Hg (Hg⁰) at the surface, via a path never considered before.

Experimental analysis was performed on mural samples from the Monastery of Pedralbes, one of the finest Catalan Gothic examples in Spain. Figure 1 and Table I summarize our main experimental results about the presence and in-depth distribution of the above-mentioned alteration products. The data were obtained by multimodal characterization of α -HgS samples from a strongly degraded mural painting. Microscopic x-ray-diffraction (μ -XRD) experiments were performed at the hard-x-ray micro- and nanoprobe beam line (P06) of the PETRA III storage ring (DESY, Hamburg, Germany), using a primary energy of 18 keV. The energy was selected by means of a Si(111) double crystal monochromator. The beam was focused to 1.6 μ m \times 0.6 μ m (hor \times vert) employing a Kirkpatrick-Baez mirror optic. Diffraction signals were recorded in

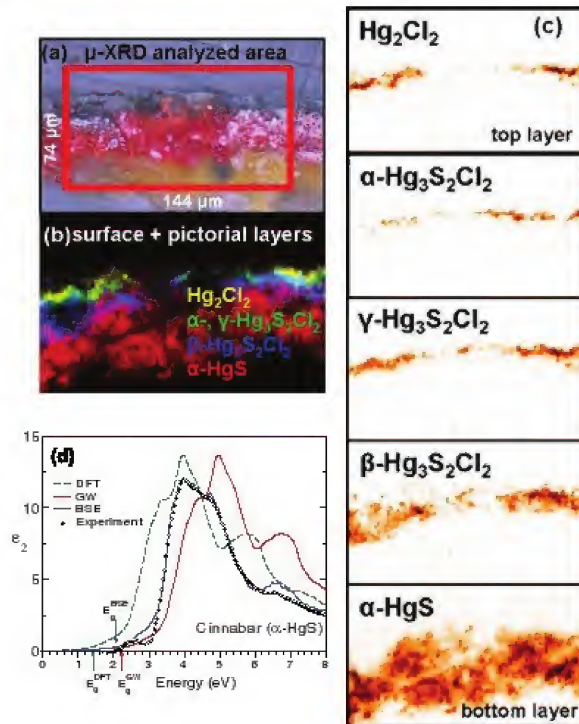


FIG. 1 (color online). (a) Degraded sample from the Monastery of Pedralbes, analyzed area as seen under ordinary light, side view; (b) high-resolution μ -XRD color map, with false color, indicating the five minerals, side view; (c) μ -XRD maps corresponding to Fig. 1(b), albeit separately for each of the five minerals; (d) optical absorption spectra of α -HgS compared with experiment [33].

transmission geometry with a $2k \times 2k$ MarCCD area detector (MAR Research, CA, U.S.).

Figure 1(a) shows the degraded sample under investigation (side view), with the area analyzed by μ -XRD indicated (the area has dimensions of $144 \times 74 \mu\text{m}^2$, with a $2 \times 1 \mu\text{m}^2$ step size). The red cinnabar capped by gray layers is clearly visible. The detailed sample stratigraphy, visualized by scanning μ -XRD maps, is reported in Figs. 1(b) and 1(c), which show the distribution of the original red paint layer

TABLE I. Electronic band gaps (direct and indirect, where relevant) of selected compounds, in eV.

Mineral	Cinnabar	Corderoite	Calomel
Formula	$\alpha\text{-HgS}$	$\alpha\text{-Hg}_3\text{S}_2\text{Cl}_2$	Hg_2Cl_2
Color	Red	Yellow	White
E_g^{exp} (eV)	2.1–2.28 ^a		3.9 ^b
E_g^{DFT} (eV)	1.40 ^{ind} , 1.42 ^{dir}	1.98	2.06
E_g^{GW} (eV)	2.24 ^{ind} , 2.43 ^{dir}	2.90	3.52

^aExperimental data: Photoemission [9] at 300 K, optical gaps [10] at 77 and 4 K.

^bOptical gap [11] at 77 K.

α -HgS in relation to that of several other secondary compounds, formed as a result of one or more alteration processes. Panel (b) shows a color map identifying the in-depth composition of the area analyzed, and panel (c) reports the same data as a layered stack. The XRD maps demonstrate the presence of both Hg-S-Cl and Hg-Cl compounds localized in the degraded sample, and the coexistence of corderoite ($\alpha\text{-Hg}_3\text{S}_2\text{Cl}_2$) with the two rare and relatively unknown phases γ - and β - $\text{Hg}_3\text{S}_2\text{Cl}_2$. The detection of these polymorphs points to a critical reexamination of previous experiments and also confirms earlier suggestions about intermediate phases in the cinnabar-corderoite transformation [12,13]. The paint layer stack shown in Fig. 1(c) indicates that these two compounds are present close to the outer surface of the paint multilayer, in contact with the outer layer of altered material, consisting of crystalline calomel, Hg_2Cl_2 (no HgCl_2 is visible in our XRD data). Nonetheless, it is important to understand from the stratigraphy that the β phase appears mainly in the pictorial layers of the paintings, and not on the very surface, and that the formation of the sulfochloride phases occurs in the order $\beta \rightarrow \gamma$ or α . Corderoite has been widely identified in the majority of studies as constituting the main Hg-S-Cl phase; visible effects of degradation with the passing of time (and subsequent appearance of mercury chlorides) can, thus, be studied in this polymorph.

In what follows, we present *ab initio* calculations for cinnabar and the other main Hg-based minerals constituting the layered stack, in order to unravel (a) their original colors, (b) the microscopic mechanisms inducing the transformation from one mineral to another, and (c) the mechanisms which induce the photodarkening.

Theoretical spectroscopic results indicate that none of the minerals identified by the x-ray analysis above is intrinsically gray or black, thus, suggesting that identification of the dark component is not possible just by looking at the crystalline composition of the degraded paintings. In Fig. 1(d), we show the optical spectrum of cinnabar computed within density functional theory (DFT), many-body perturbation theory in the G_0W_0 approximation [14], and through solution of the Bethe-Salpeter equation (BSE), which includes excitonic effects. All calculations were performed with the ABINIT package [15], using norm conserving pseudopotentials and the Perdew-Burke-Ernzerhof [16] parametrization of the generalized gradient approximation, and with G_0W_0 calculations based on the Godby-Needs plasmon-pole model. The BSE spectrum shows excellent agreement with experiment, with a relevant redistribution of the oscillator strength of the different transitions with respect to the G_0W_0 spectrum. However, and more importantly, the onset of the absorption occurs lower than that computed within a non-interacting quasiparticle picture (G_0W_0) by less than 0.2 eV. This difference is small enough to approximate the optical gap with the electronic one, and we assume this is true for the other mercury compounds. The values for the G_0W_0

gaps for selected minerals reported in Fig. 1, together with available experimental values, indicate that such gaps are consistent with the observed red (cinnabar), yellow (corderoite), and white (Hg_2Cl_2) color. Thus, none of these compounds being itself gray or black, the photodarkening mechanism cannot be explained on the basis of the XRD composition analysis alone, as the dark phase responsible for the degradation remains “invisible” to the corresponding XRD maps.

In order to understand quantitatively the microscopic mechanisms for the photoactivation, stratified formation, and degradation of the original and secondary minerals, we have analyzed the effect of illumination combined with exposure to a humid environment (as given by Cl salts, common in humid environments, salts in the air, water in the walls, and even in the protective Punic wax [3,5]) and with natural defects induced by exposure to oxygen.

Photoexcited electrons in the conduction band and partner holes in the valence band can give rise to chemical reactions (and even partial decomposition) before deexcitation, depending on the relative energy of such reactions with respect to the band edges. In order to correctly estimate the band gap values at the surface of α -HgS and other materials, the procedure of Ref. [17] (see also the Supplemental Material [18]) was used, i.e., DFT was employed to estimate the band edges and band gap values for the surface and these initial values were refined by employing the G_0W_0 results for the bulk. For the original red pigment, the valence band maximum and conduction band minimum (E_{VBM} , E_{CBM}) for the (10 $\bar{1}$ 0) cinnabar surface (cleavage plane [19]) with respect to the vacuum level are reported in Fig. 2. DFT calculations for the surface were performed with the quantum-ESPRESSO package [20], using norm-conserving pseudopotentials. The results for the ground state of the bulk phases were checked with those obtained by ABINIT. The surface was modeled within a supercell framework using thick (20 Å) slabs separated by vacuum.

Two key results can be obtained by comparing the band edges of the cinnabar surface with relevant redox reactions, all evaluated at $p\text{H} = 4$ (this value corresponds to a moderate acidic environment induced by Cl impurities and also

corresponds to the $p\text{H}$ at which the surface of cinnabar is neutral [21]). First, comparison with the potential of the reaction $\text{HgS} + 2e^- \rightarrow \text{Hg}(0) + \text{S}^{2-}$ (Fig. 2) rules out the possibility that the darkening of vermilion is caused by photoinduced reduction and a possible spontaneous deposition of Hg at the surface. According to our result, the photoexcited electrons have, indeed, insufficient energy to directly reduce Hg^{2+} ions (in α -HgS) to Hg^0 . This refutes suggestions by previous experiments [2,8] of an initial direct decomposition of α -HgS itself, due to photoreductive dissolution, to give metallic Hg at the surface, and points to other activation mechanisms for the first step of the transformation.

The second key result is related to the role of humidity, which actually constitutes the activation mechanism under illumination. Facets exposed to light are of course also open to interaction with more harmful elements, and the presence of Cl in the other identified minerals yields an important clue. Our energy level diagram indicates that the cinnabar valence band edge computed with G_0W_0 lies well below the (Cl^-/Cl_2) level by about 0.8 eV, allowing for oxidation of chloride impurities by photogenerated valence band holes at the cinnabar surface, and facilitating the adsorption of chlorine on the surface itself. This finding describes quantitatively the effect of humidity, as given by Cl salts [1]: a surface modification of the original red pigment takes place, due to quantum-allowed electron transfer mechanisms, explaining the initiation of reported transformations [1,22–24]. Although the details of the crystal growth are beyond the scope of this work, our preliminary studies show that Cl preferentially adsorbs on the cinnabar surface at a site consistent with its final position in the corderoite lattice [18].

We now consider the possible photoactivation mechanisms for the secondary minerals. For the sulfochlorides, we focus on corderoite. Different authors have suggested that corderoite decomposes via different paths, all involving the release of sulfur [2,3,7], which combines with atmospheric oxygen and escapes as SO_2 , explaining the formation of the sulfur-free phases.

Figure 3(a) shows the DFT local (relaxed) structure and density of states (DOS) around a S ion in pure corderoite, and around two structural defects likely to occur in an exposed environment: substitution of S by O and formation of S vacancies. For defective corderoite, we considered a ($2 \times 2 \times 2$) supercell of the pristine material. The DOS for the O substitution [Fig. 3(b)] shows the presence of a defect level just below the conduction band edge. However, its shift with respect to the bottom of the conduction band is small, and more importantly, the onset of the conduction band (and, hence, the color of the material) does not change with respect to pure corderoite.

Intriguing effects come into play when considering the case of a S vacancy. Upon relaxation, the Hg vertices of the pyramidal SHg_3 framework of pure corderoite form a

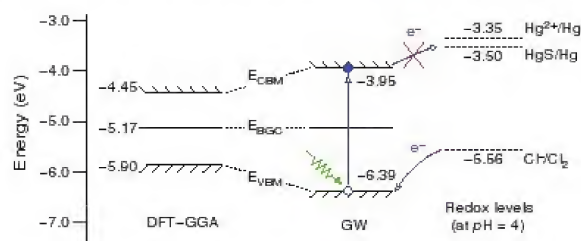


FIG. 2 (color online). Band edge positions for the α -HgS(10 $\bar{1}$ 0) surface (within DFT and after addition of GW (i.e., G_0W_0) corrections, E_{BGC} denotes the band gap center), and free reaction energies of Cl^- oxidation and Hg(II) reduction ($p\text{H} = 4$, see text).

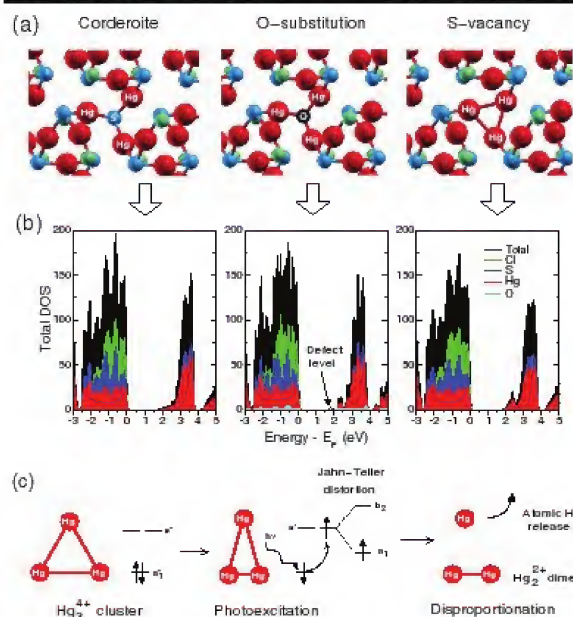


FIG. 3 (color online). (a) Atomic arrangements around a S atom in pure corderoite, around a S vacancy and around an O impurity in defective corderoite, and (b) their density of states. (c) Schematic of Jahn-Teller distortion of Hg_3^{4+} -like cluster [27] in defective corderoite, leading to ejection of metallic Hg.

planar triangular Hg_3 cationic cluster, in the cavity given by the vacancy [see Fig. 3(a)]. The DOS reveals the presence of a defect state ($\text{Hg } s$ type) at the conduction band edge. Analyzing the symmetry of states through crystal field and molecular orbital theory, the bonding within the Hg_3^{4+} cluster in D_{3h} symmetry can be considered as given by the overlap of the s orbital, generating a bonding a'_1 and two degenerate weakly antibonding orbitals e' . Severe Jahn-Teller type distortions are known to occur in such Hg_3^{4+} clusters when photoexcited electrons occupy such degenerate levels [25–28], leading to slow release of one Hg atom and formation of stable dimeric Hg_2^{2+} units (see Fig. 3) [29,30]. We have, thus, analyzed within DFT the possibility of photolysis from the defective cluster structure within the supercell and found that the energy to emit one of the Hg atoms from the unstable fragment is 1.82 eV. This confirms that, in a molecule in solid picture, the process is well possible under both sunlight and museum lamps and could be facilitated by the large cavities in corderoite, as observed for other mercury compounds [31]. This process interconnects the three main factors of impurities, light, and exposure to air: corderoite, formed through capture of Cl impurities, is unstable under continuous illumination and exposure to oxygen, which act concomitantly. This structural instability constitutes the precursor factor for the formation of stable Hg_2^{2+} units, the building motifs of Hg_2Cl_2 , and supports our experi-

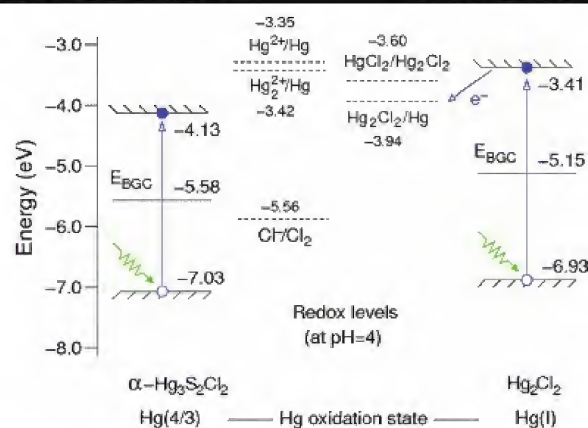


FIG. 4 (color online). G_0W_0 electronic levels of the surface of the secondary minerals: $\alpha\text{-Hg}_3\text{S}_2\text{Cl}_2$ and Hg_2Cl_2 , compared with relevant redox potentials.

mental observation of this latter phase as a natural transformation of corderoite.

A many-particle analysis of the band edges for corderoite and Hg_2Cl_2 allows us to investigate the different degradation processes occurring after the initial transformation of the original vermilion layer. G_0W_0 results are reported in Fig. 4, where they are compared with standard redox potentials (at $pH = 4$). For corderoite, photochemical reactions involving the reduction of its mixed valence Hg ions to $\text{Hg}(0)$ or $\text{Hg}(I)$ are not favored at the surface. This rules out a chemically driven path via electron-transfer mechanisms for the reported degradation of corderoite under illumination [2,3,7,13] and points to structural instability as the driving factor for its degradation. However, in contrast to pure cinnabar and corderoite, we find that the electronic levels for the most likely exposed surfaces of Hg_2Cl_2 align favorably with the potential for reduction to elemental Hg, allowing for photoreductive dissolution, i.e., decomposition via photoinduced electron transfer processes.

Thus, our results indicate that different degradation mechanisms are active in the different layers (structural instability for corderoite and electron transfer processes for calomel) and give rise to deposition of elemental Hg (dull gray color), which is, thus, ultimately responsible for the discoloration of the paintings. The two superimposed mechanisms cited above not only explain well the stratigraphy observed by the XRD maps, but also clarify the difficulty in identifying the origin of the photodarkening by looking at the composition of the degraded paint work, as their final by-product, Hg^0 , cannot be detected by conventional (room temperature) x-ray analysis, due to the unique nature of this element (a liquid metal) [32].

In conclusion, through a combination of high-resolution x-ray diffraction and theoretical spectroscopy, we have clarified the composition of the degraded layers of the

painting and proposed a consistent model for the pathway through which illumination, humidity, and exposure to air concomitantly affect the pigments. Our calculations elucidate the layered succession of alteration products observed by the XRD maps and indicate that the different layers are photoactivated by different mechanisms. These findings allow us to rule out previously postulated schemes involving straightforward reduction of Hg in cinnabar, to discriminate between different decomposition paths for corderoite, and to unravel the presence and formation of different sulfochlorides. The presence of elemental Hg as a by-product of the photoinduced mechanisms is proposed to cause the ultimate darkening of the paintings. Experimental verification of elemental Hg is, thus, strongly desired in order to provide a definitive explanation of cinnabar degradation; we suggest the application of protocols for low-temperature x-ray analysis for its detection. This work opens the way to explore the nanoscale structure and photoinduced mechanisms in various damaged artworks and to look for preservation strategies.

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Supplemental Material: Casting light on the darkening of colors in historical paintings

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Bulk properties: excited state calculations. Calculations are performed using the planewave/pseudopotential code ABINIT [1] for the DFT structural, electronic and G_0W_0 calculations, with norm conserving pseudopotentials. The results for the ground state of the bulk phases were also checked with the quantum-ESPRESSO package [2], which was further used for the calculations on surfaces. All calculations have been performed within using GGA in the PBE parametrization [3]. The cut-off energy and the Monkhorst-Pack k-meshes were 60 Ha for all compounds, $6 \times 6 \times 4$, $4 \times 4 \times 4$, $6 \times 6 \times 4$, $4 \times 4 \times 6$ for cinnabar, corderoite, calomel and kenhsuite respectively. The Godby-Needs plasmon pole model was used in the G_0W_0 calculations to model the dielectric function. In order to reduce computational time, calculations have been performed without taking into account the spin orbit (SO) coupling. The Bethe-Salpeter calculation for cinnabar was performed on a shifted $12 \times 12 \times 10$ grid, using the Tamm-Dancoff approximation, a scissor operator (obtained by the G_0W_0 result) and the iterative Haydock technique. The result shown is averaged between the extraordinary and ordinary ray. Local field effects were included.

Surfaces and defects: band levels and DOS calculations. Surfaces were modelled at the DFT-GGA level with the quantum-ESPRESSO code [2] using supercells containing 20 Å thick slabs separated by 20 Å of vacuum. Experimental lattice parameters were adopted for the band level calculations in order to be consistent with the bulk GW corrections, and therefore atoms were not relaxed from their bulk positions. The k-meshes for the surfaces are consistent with those used for the bulk. Cinnabar cleaves cleanly in the $[10\bar{1}0]$ plane, and is thus assumed to be the exposed facet: DFT calculations find the as-cleaved surface to be stable, with no surface states lying inside the projected bulk gap. The band edge po-

sitions were found by combining the DFT value for the band gap center of the surface, and half of the G_0W_0 band gap obtained on the bulk, using the procedure suggested in Ref. [4]. We therefore use the E_{BGC} (the energy of the band gap center, relative to the vacuum level) obtained from a DFT calculation on the surface and our previously computed G_0W_0 bulk band gap E_g to calculate $E_{VBM} = E_{BGC} - \frac{1}{2}E_g$, $E_{CBM} = E_{BGC} + \frac{1}{2}E_g$. The energy of the electrostatic potential at the centre of the vacuum was taken as the reference ($E = 0$) level. Following correction by the procedure described above, the gap opens symmetrically about E_{BGC} , with the resulting G_0W_0 band edge positions as shown in Fig. 2 and Fig. 4.

A study of possible Cl adsorption sites was performed within DFT in a (1×2) unit cell of the cinnabar surface, using instead the theoretical lattice constants and outermost layers allowed to relax. The adsorption geometry shows a bonding environments similar to those present in the sulfochlorides. Within DFT, Cl impurities adsorb at the surface of cinnabar at a bridging site between parallel S-Hg-S chains. The Hg-Cl interatomic distance (2.88–2.93 Å) is consistent with the equivalent (bridging) distances found in β -Hg₃S₂Cl₂ (2.83 Å), kenhsuite (2.84 Å) and corderoite (2.87 Å). Similar observations can be made for the S-Cl distances (α -HgS:Cl: 3.85–3.99 Å; corderoite: 3.72–4.03 Å; kenhsuite: 3.90–3.93 Å).

Surfaces of other minerals were modelled by taking the smallest possible surface unit cell that yields a charge neutral, insulating surface: this coincided with planes parallel to the c -axis or helix structures. Defects in corderoite were modeled within a $2 \times 2 \times 2$ cell at the DFT level and theoretical lattice parameters. All atoms were allowed to relax fully. The energy of photolysis for the trimeric cluster was computed from the energy difference

between the S-defect cell, the same cell with a neighboring Hg atom removed (and allowed to relax), and a single Hg atom in the same cell.

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Gloucester Castle Discovered Beneath Prison Basketball Court

discovery.com

posted: 12/08/15
by: Danny Clemens



The front gate of HM Prison Gloucester earlier this year.

The front gate of HM Prison Gloucester earlier this year.

Archaeologists have unearthed the remains of 12th-century Norman castle wall beneath the now-closed HM Prison Gloucester's basketball court.

The remains once formed the castle's keep,

a large fortified stone tower that was protected by a series of ditches, drawbridges and walls. The Gloucester Citizen reports that the keep's remains are 12 feet thick; they formed a structure that was originally 98 feet long and 65 feet across.

Built between 1110 and 1120 A.D., the castle eventually fell into disrepair and was repurposed as a prison in the late 1400s. In 1785, the castle was almost completely demolished to make way for a new prison complex, which operated until 2013.

In addition to the castle wall, archaeologists have uncovered hundreds of well-preserved small artifacts, ranging from dice to complete pottery vessels.

"It is a very rare opportunity to dig a Norman castle in a great historic city. We have recorded a part of Gloucester's history that was once covered with the sands of time," Cotswold Archaeology project manager Cliff Bateman said in a news release.

Cotswold's experts were executing an archaeological evaluation of the prison site before future redevelopment.

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Kristina Killgrove ,

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

In a small city just above the heel of Italy's boot, Carlo Broschi was born in 1705. Better known as Farinelli, his stage name, he became the greatest opera singer of the 18th century, performing all over Europe. This was the height of popularity of *castrati*, men who had been castrated as boys, before their voices changed. Farinelli is said to have had a rich soprano voice, with a range that would make any modern-day diva jealous.

Farinelli died in 1782, and after his original grave was destroyed in the Napoleonic wars, his remains were transferred to La Certosa cemetery in Bologna in 1810. There he rested until anthropologists excavated his grave in 2006, searching for additional information about his life. There are very few skeletons of individuals known to have been castrated, so anthropologist Maria Belcastro and colleagues sought to learn about Farinelli the person and the *castrato*.

The bones that survived the move to Bologna and the interment of Farinelli's great-niece in the same grave decades later were few and not particularly well-preserved. Their demographic assessment was based on the fragmentary remains: the skeleton was male based on a narrow sciatic notch and absence of a preauricular sulcus; fused cranial sutures, dental wear, and degenerative changes in the vertebrae suggest advanced age-at-death, or over 60; and the length of the ulna revealed him to be quite tall, perhaps 6'3".



Carlo Broschi, better known as Farinelli, seated at center in this painting by Jacopo Amigoni, circa 1750-1752. (Image from user Sailko at Wikimedia Commons.)

Immediately, Belcastro and colleagues noticed some interesting differences in Farinelli's skeleton compared to the bones of other adult males. For one thing, he was much taller than average, with very long limb bones. His bones also maintained some lines of epiphyseal fusion. As children grow, their long bones form from three or more parts: a tube-like shaft and two end plates. Normally, when growth stops in late adolescence, the bone parts join together and fuse; the line of fusion eventually disappears in early adulthood. Both Farinelli's abnormal height and his lack of fused bones are likely related to growth delays caused by his castration. Further, the researchers discovered osteoporosis and a condition called hyperostosis frontalis interna, both of which are generally much more common in

older, post-menopausal women. These may also be related to the abnormal hormonal changes caused by castration.

Farinelli's teeth provide additional information about his daily life, unrelated to his status as a *castrato*. Using CT scans, the researchers were able to virtually reconstruct his jaw. There was some chipping of his molars, possibly related to diet. Farinelli wrote that he was a fan of "mortadella, macaroni with courgettes, quince jelly, and chocolate," Belcastro and colleagues say in their most recent article, and this soft diet may explain his relatively unscathed teeth, especially considering he lived to be 77 years old. It is also possible that Farinelli, who was frequently around the upper social classes, took care of his

dental health, possibly with a toothbrush, which was a new, elite instrument in the late 18th century.

Heavy wear on his upper and lower front teeth reveal Farinelli had an overbite. While overbites are certainly not rare, Belcastro and colleagues suggest it may be related to castration if the mandible did not grow as much as the rest of the skull did. Further contributing to this diagnosis of problematic overbite is the fact that Farinelli complained during his lifetime of chronic stomachache. The researchers think that that problem may be related to his overbite and small jaw, which made him unable to chew food sufficiently. The overbite "did not likely affect Farinelli's ability as a singer," they write, "but may have generated some gastrointestinal disorders which were worsened by the high levels of stress related to his professional activity."

There is, unfortunately, no recording of Farinelli at the height of his fame, although a 1994 movie imagines what he may have sounded like. The major events in Farinelli's life are well-known, but Belcastro and colleagues have added their anthropological expertise to explore the more mundane parts of his life and to contribute to osteological knowledge of the effects of castration on the skeleton.

When my osteology students learn about traits that help figure out the sex of a skeleton, at least one always asks what effects sex reassignment surgery might have on the human skeleton, and I admit I don't really know. But with more research along the lines of Belcastro and colleagues' work, we may find out.

Dental status and 3D reconstruction of the malocclusion of the famous singer Farinelli (1705-1782)*International Journal of Paleopathology*Hyperostosis frontalis interna (HFI) and castration: the case of the famous singer Farinelli (1705-1782)*Journal of Anatomy*

Kristina Killgrove is a bioarchaeologist at the University of West Florida. For more osteology news, follow her on Twitter (@DrKillgrove) or like her Facebook page Powered by Osteons.

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Mum posts cat an advent calendar - but the cat can't collect it as he has no ID

What sounds like the plot of a children's book is actually a real-life Royal Mail mix-up



Ted the cat Ted the cat Photo: Brittany Maher-Kirk/Facebook Photo: Brittany Maher-Kirk/Facebook

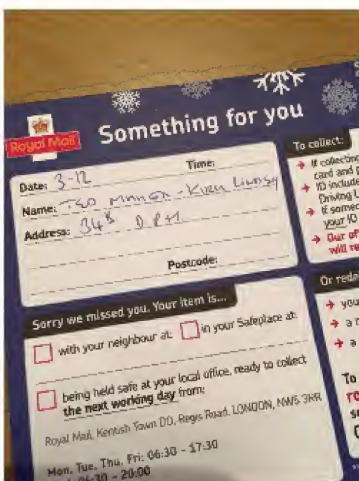
A cat may not be able to get his advent calendar from the post office, because he has no ID.

This bizarre story came about after Brittany Maher-Kirk's mum addressed an advert calendar to her cat.

Sadly, Ms. Maher-Kirk was not in when the package was delivered, so it was returned to the Post Office.

Because it is addressed to her cat, not to her, she is not able to pick it up.

Because it is addressed to her cat,



The card is addressed to Ted the cat

The cat has to pick it up.

However, her feline friend does not have any ID, as he is a cat.

She posted about her ordeal on Facebook and wrote: "So my mum posted the cat an advent calendar. Unfortunately, we missed the delivery and the post office won't give it me as the cat does not have ID.

"I've got to ring up the Post Office Head Office and explain that my mother has sent the cat an advent calendar, addressed to the cat, and he can't pop in to pick it up himself or lend me his ID to do it for him..."

The Post Office website outlines the strict rules.

It says: "If you've received a 'Something for you' card, it is because no one was available to take delivery of your item. The fastest way to retrieve your item is to collect it from your local delivery office. The address and opening times should be on the back of the 'Something for you' card. If this information is missing, please call us on 08456 050 767. Please wait 24 hours before collecting your item from an Enquiry Office or Customer Service Point.

"To keep your mail as secure as possible, we require proof of identification

"Please ensure you take with you:

"The 'Something for you' card or 'Fee to Pay' card

"AND One of the following, in the name of the person the item is addressed to

- Credit or debit card.
- Bank or building society cheque/savings book.
- Valid Passport.
- Driving Licence.
- NHS Medical Card.
- Photo ID card"

The cat didn't have to do without an advent calendar.

She tweeted, saying that she had to explain the reason she could not produce 'Ted's' ID at the Post Office.

They probably had a good laugh about it afterwards.

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Catholics furious after artist writes 'paedo' in stolen communion wafers

Catholics furious after artist writes 'paedo' in stolen communion wafers

Jessica Jones · 25 Nov 2015, 10:44

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GMT+01:00

Religious groups are suing a Spanish artist over his latest exhibit: consecrated wafers spelling out the word "paedophilia".

The exhibit, entitled *Buried*, by Spanish artist Abel Azcona has

caused controversy since it opened on Friday.

The exhibition tells the stories of people who were shot and who disappeared during the Spanish Civil War, but also includes a retrospective of Azcona's work, which includes several pieces that are critical of Spanish society and religion, including the piece "Amen" in which 242 holy wafers spell out "paedophilia".

The exhibit has caused such outrage that on Tuesday evening someone sneaked into Pamplona City Hall and stole the holy wafers.

Azcona acquired the over 200 hosts used in the exhibit by "pretending" to go to Holy Communion then pocketing the wafers, according to critics, who launched a change.org petition to get the exhibit closed down.

As of Wednesday morning, the petition had amassed over 96,000 signatures.

"The Holy Sacrament of Jesus Christ should not be put on the floor or stolen," one person commented on the petition.

"How could a human do such a thing?!" wrote another commenter.

Hidden camera shots show how Azcona pocketed the hosts during mass.

"Religion is at the same level as cancer or AIDS, and in fact, it has killed more people than those diseases," Azcona said in a recent interview with Spanish magazine *Jot Down*.

The artist, 27, is no stranger to controversy. His previous works include *Dark Room* during which he was locked in a darkened room for 60 days and nights with minimal food, and *La Calle*, for which Azcona received hormone treatment to become a transsexual prostitute.

Lawsuit

Religious groups reacted angrily to the latest exhibit; the Spanish Association of Christian Lawyers filed a lawsuit to close the exhibit, claiming that "over 40,000 people protested the exhibit in less than 20 hours" in a change.org petition and on social media.

"Pamplona City Hall - stop this serious public profanity now! It's a crime. Sign!

"The lawsuit accuses the artist of "stealing consecrated hosts from masses in Madrid and Barcelona" accusing him of a "repeated crime of desecration and crimes against religious sentiment" under Spain's Penal Code.

"I've just received a triple criminal lawsuit. Association of Catholic Lawyers, Diocese and Archbishop. Happy Christmas to me." Abel Azcona tweeted.

"If there's a trial, there's a trial," Azcona told local newspaper, Noticias de Navarra, highlighting that he had "committed no crime".

Azcona also criticized the "Christians" who had been sending him abusive messages on social media and those who had been leaving graffiti messages around Pamplona calling for the exhibit to be closed.

Catholic websites also reacted angrily, infovaticana.com ran the headline "Pamplona City Hall, in the hands of Satan".

Even political parties waded into the row, with the Unión del Pueblo Navarro (UPN) making a request in the Parliament of Navarra that the exhibit be banned, arguing that it "threatens the beliefs of a section of society".

The request was rejected in parliament.

"It has a slight whiff of censorship," said the spokesman for Basque nationalist party Bildu, Adolfo Araiz.

Spain's ruling Popular Party has criticized the exhibit calling it an "absolute lack of respect" in a press release.

Protest against the exhibition on Tuesday night.

With all the controversy brewing around the exhibit, on Tuesday evening, the hosts mysteriously vanished, as critics staged a protest outside the exhibition.

"We have informed the artist and have both decided that this part of the exhibition will not be replaced but that the exhibition will continue until January," Pamplona City Hall said in a press release on Tuesday evening.

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Chambers Murder Case Nears 1 Year Anniversary

MEMPHIS, TN (localmemphis.com)

Published 12/01 2015 04:57PM Updated 12/01 2015 10:50PM

localmemphis.com



• It has been nearly one year since a Batesville teenager was burned alive.

The December 6th murder of Jessica Chambers gripped the nation.

Investigators have worked tirelessly in getting justice for Jessica.

Sheriff Dennis Darby has a hard time holding back the tears when talking about the murder of 19-year-old Jessica Chambers.

As emotional as Darby is, he said he is focused on the case and they will solve it.

Right now, it's just a matter of when.

"This was the most heinous crime I've ever heard of," Darby said.

The murder of 19-year-old Jessica Chambers gained national attention. Chambers was found December 6th of last year on the side of a country road in Pope, Mississippi, outside of Batesville. She was next to her car, burning alive.

No one has been arrested for chambers murder. Panola County Sheriff Dennis Darby wants to assure the public they are very close to solving the case.

But you have to keep in mind, detectives cannot reveal everything they know.

"It's possibly more than one association...possibly," Darby said. "This case will be solved. Hopefully and possibly pretty soon."

Darby said he tries not to focus on outsiders, who accuse investigators of not working hard enough on getting justice for Jessica.

"This has set off an extreme amount of investigating for drugs and corruption," Darby said.

According to Darby, hard work and patience will pay off. He said investigators are

on the right track. They just have to prove it.

In time, he said they will.

"There's gonna be a lot of arrests before it's all over with because of Jessica Chambers. And she's helping us even though she's not with us today in cleaning up a large mess in Panola County Mississippi and in the counties too because it's getting outside of here," Darby said.

Sunday, December 6th is the one year anniversary of Jessica Chambers murder.

Sheriff Darby encourages anyone who may have information to come forward.

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Cheese heist ends in truck rollover, 3 arrests

CBC News
2015/11/25

cbc.ca

Cheese heist ends in truck rollover, 3 arrests

Police say tractor trailer packed with cheese was stolen late Tuesday



Three men were arrested after allegedly stealing this tractor trailer, which was full of cheese, before crashing on a highway off-ramp north of Toronto. (Tony Smyth/CBC)

Police arrested three men who allegedly stole a truck packed with cheese, then evaded officers until the truck rolled over on a highway north of Toronto.

York Regional Police Const. Andy Pattenden said he has "no idea" if the suspects were after the cheese, but said upwards of 30,000 pounds of it were stolen and it has a

"pretty high value."

Cargo theft is an ongoing issue in the area, Pattenden said, with thieves targeting "whatever commodity is of high value."

York Regional Police were alerted about the stolen truck around 10 p.m. on Tuesday in the Highway 7 and Vaughan Valley Boulevard area of Vaughan, Ont. Police soon located the truck, but the driver refused to stop.

"Out of concern for public safety officers did not pursue the tractor trailer," York Regional Police said in a news release.

Officers tracked the truck using GPS. Soon after the suspects fled from officers, the truck rolled over near an off-ramp at Highway 7 West and Highway 427.

All three men fled on foot following the crash, police allege.

York Regional Police officers and members of the Ontario Provincial Police began tracking the suspects along with a canine unit — no, Pattenden said, the dogs weren't chasing the scent of sharp cheddar.

One suspect was found driving in a car in the area of Royal Crest Drive and arrested police said. The other two were found nearby where they were trying to hail a taxi.

The three suspects, who range in age from 19-36, are each charged with theft over \$5,000 and possession of property obtained by crime over \$5,000.

All three are set to appear in court today.

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Chinese researchers unveil brain powered car

reuters.com

Mon Dec 7, 2015 11:50am EST

China's first mind-controlled car has been developed by researchers in the north-east port city of Tianjin.

Chinese researchers have developed what they say is the country's first car that uses nothing but brain power to drive.

The research team from Nankai University, in the north-eastern Chinese port city of Tianjin, has spent two years bringing the mind-controlled vehicle to reality.

By wearing brain signal-reading equipment a driver can control the car to go forward, backwards, come to a stop, and both lock and unlock the vehicle, all without moving their hands or feet.

Researcher Zhang Zhao told Reuters the equipment comprises 16 sensors that capture EEG (electroencephalogram) signals from the driver's brain. They developed a computer program that selects the relevant signals and translates them, enabling control of the car.

"The tester's EEG signals are picked up by this (brain signal-reading) equipment and transmitted wirelessly to the computer. The computer processes the signals to categorize and recognize people's intention, then translates them into control command to the car. The core of the whole flow is to process the EEG signals, which is done on the computer," said Zhang.

Associate Professor Duan Feng, from the university's College of Computer and Control Engineering, led the project. He emphasized that the technology is aimed at better serving human beings, and that it might soon be possible to combine brain controlled technology and driverless cars, such as the Google Self Driving Car (SDC).

"Driverless cars' further development can bring more benefits to us, since we can better realize functions relating to brain controlling with the help of the driverless cars' platform," said Duan. "In the end, cars, whether driverless or not, and machines are serving for people. Under such circumstances, people's intentions must be recognized. In our project, it makes the cars better serve human beings."

Duan said worries about potential road accidents caused by the driver being distracted while their brain was in control of his team's car were unfounded, because concentration was needed only when changing the vehicle's moving status, i.e. changing lanes or turning. Whether such an application would be enough to persuade drivers to get behind the wheel and control a car with their mind is far from certain, though.

The researchers say their initial idea was inspired by helping disabled people who are physically unable to steer cars.

"There are two starting points of this project. The first one is to provide a driving method

without using hands or feet for the disabled who are unable to move freely; and secondly, to provide healthy people with a new and more intellectualized driving mode," Zhang said.

At present the vehicle, in collaboration with Chinese car manufacturer Great Wall Motor, can only drive in a straight direction, and there are no plans to put it into production.

A part of devices of a brain-controlled vehicle system is seen connected to a car during a demonstration at Nankai University in Tianjin, China, November 17, 2015.

Reuters/Kim Kyung-Hoon



Researcher Zhang Zhao wearing a brain signal-reading equipment moves a car forward with his brain wave during a demonstration at Nankai University in Tianjin, China, November 17, 2015. Reuters/Kim Kyung-Hoon

Researcher Zhang Zhao wearing a brain signal-reading equipment prepares to move a car with his brain wave, during a demonstration at Nankai University in Tianjin, China, November 17, 2015. Reuters/Kim Kyung-Hoon

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Chinese villagers to sue Dutch collector for return of Buddha statue allegedly stolen 20 years ago

ibtimes.co.uk



Rachel
Arputhara
Middleton

• By Rachel Middleton
November 24, 2015 06:34 GMT



The statue that was the centerpiece of the Mummy World exhibition at the Natural History Museum in Budapest in March 2015. Visitors can see the skeletal remains of the mummified monk inside it. REUTERS/Bernadett Szabo

A group of Chinese villagers from Yangchun in the Fujian Province have hired a team of top lawyers to sue a Dutch collector after he refused to return a mummified Buddha statue that the villagers claim was stolen from its temple 20 years ago. The villagers have signed on seven lawyers to take their case through the Dutch judicial system.

The Yangchun village Party

Chief Lin Wenqing said that the villagers had gone through official and private channels to negotiate the return of the statue. He claimed the statue was worshipped as a god in the temple for around 1,000 years.

The collector allegedly agreed to return the relic to the village if "it is proven to have belonged to a Buddhist community that still exists," but apparently later changed his mind. The statue of Buddha contains the mummified body of Zhanggong Zushi, a local villager who became a monk in his twenties. He was famed for helping people, treating diseases and spreading the Buddhist belief.

When he died at the age of 37, his body was mummified and placed in the statue during the Song Dynasty (960-1279). The statue was reported to have been worshipped in the village temple ever since. The temple still displays the statute's hat and clothes that were left behind.

The statue has been on display at the Mummy World exhibition at the Hungarian Natural History Museum since October last year. However, it was pulled from the exhibition following claims that it was stolen. The golden statute of the sitting Buddha is about four foot tall. Visitors to the exhibition could see the skeletal remains of the mummified monk inside it through a television monitor.

Liu Yang, who is leading the group of lawyers, said the evidence on the case has been collected and the legal suit will be brought to court by the end of the year. He told the Xinhua news agency that the court will be told that the village has a deep spiritual connection with the statue and that there is a sense of urgency in reclaiming it.

The Dutch collector has claimed that he obtained the item in 1996. Under Dutch law, the time frame for civil litigation is 20 years, which gives very little time for the villagers to secure its return through legal means.

"The validity period for recovering the relic is going to expire next year. So we have pressure to complete the legal work quickly," Liu said. He will fly to the Netherlands to work with a Dutch counterpart in December.

Liu has successfully led a Chinese legal team in recovering relics looted from the Old Summer Place or Yuanmingyuan which was burned down by the Anglo-French allied forces during the Second Opium War in 1860. Residents from the Datian County where the village is located had written a letter to the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte in March seeking the return of the statue.

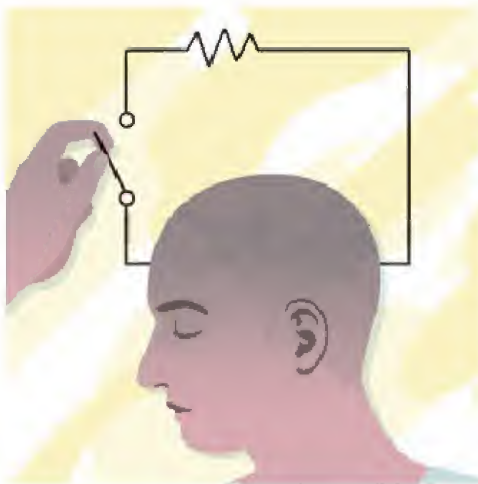
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Cocaine Cravings Zapped with Magnets | MIT Technology Review

By Adam Piore on December 3, 2015

technologyreview.com



Stefano, a 46-year-old cocaine addict from Padua, Italy, had all but accepted that he might die from his habit. He'd just relapsed after a seven-month stay at a rehab facility, his third failed attempt at getting clean. Stefano (who asked that his last name not be used) couldn't go more than two days without the drug.

So when he read a magazine article about an unusual new method to treat drug addicts, he figured he didn't have much to lose. The study described how local researchers were using a technique called transcranial magnetic stimulation to counteract cravings. He would have to sit in a chair while doctors waved a figure-8-shaped wand over his head to fire magnetic waves into his prefrontal cortex. "So almost like a joke, a little bit just to make my family happy, I said I would try," Stefano says.

Now the results of the study, involving 29 cocaine addicts seeking treatment at a Padua clinic, are out. They suggest that the magnetic stimulation treatment significantly reduced both cocaine use and cravings. Stefano says his desire for cocaine diminished dramatically after several sessions under the magnet. "I can't explain it," he says. "It happened very quickly."

The findings, presented in the European journal *Neuropsychopharmacology* today by Luigi Gallimberti, a doctor at the University of Padova Medical School, and Alberto Terraneo, a physician who treats addicts, are generating optimism among addiction researchers, because there are no effective drug treatments available for cocaine addicts. There is also a theoretical framework to explain why stimulating the brain with magnets might work, since experiments earlier this year produced similar effects in cocaine-addicted rats.

The doctors in Italy tracked the therapy's effects using urinalysis to see if addicts were using cocaine, as well as asking them to rate their cravings on a scale of 1 to 10. Of 16 who got the treatment, delivered in once-a-day sessions for five days and then once a week, 11 stayed sober compared to only three of 13 in an untreated group. "Patient improvement is pretty strong," says Antonello Bonci, scientific director of the intramural research program at the NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse and one of the authors of the study. It's a "first step toward opening a neurobiological treatment for cocaine addiction," says Bonci. "We have nothing so far to help treat cocaine addicts besides cognitive therapy and psychological support."

Other scientists noted that the study was small and that the addicts knew whether they were receiving the treatment or in a control group. "You don't want to get too excited about it, because it's a very preliminary study," says Rob Malenka, a Stanford University addiction researcher. But Malenka called the attempt to treat addiction with transcranial magnetic stimulation a "logical extension" of the technology, which is becoming an accepted therapy for some types of hard-to-treat depression.

Invented in the 1980s, TMS has grown in popularity in recent years and was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration as a treatment for depression in 2008. The exact mechanism by which it works is not fully understood. But addiction appears to establish signaling patterns in the brain that compel people to compulsively seek the drug, and applying TMS could disrupt the pattern, just as noise can interfere with a radio signal.

The Italian study sprang out of some recent, and dramatic, discoveries about the complex brain circuitry implicated in addiction. In addicts, areas of the prefrontal cortex that would normally be alight with activity

often go dark in the absence of the drug, a state researchers call “hypoactive.” And dulling of brain areas that are crucial to decision-making could be what drives addicts to continue using the drug even when the consequences are ruinous.

Earlier this year, an NIH team led by Bonci showed that cocaine-addicted rats compulsively sought the drug even after learning that doing so consistently produced electric shocks to their feet. But when Bonci and collaborators artificially stimulated brain activity in the prelimbic cortex using a technique called optogenetics, rats that normally were compulsive cocaine seekers suddenly lost interest. When Bonci restored the hypoactive state, the rats resumed compulsive cocaine seeking.

With human addicts, the idea is to create a similar effect using powerful magnets to target a brain area called the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. Bonci says brain-scanning studies indicate that the effects on brain activity appear to ripple outward, like water pouring over an umbrella. “It’s a network effect,” he says. “It creates a beautiful widespread effect.” He says he has now recruited three centers to participate in larger, blinded study of the addiction treatment, including the TMS center at Northwestern University in Chicago.

Christian Lüscher, a neuroscientist and addiction researcher at the University of Geneva, has also shown he can reverse drug-seeking behavior in mice by targeting different brain regions. He says the Italian study is significant because of how it tries to apply discoveries in basic neuroscience to addicts. It’s likely to encourage researchers to launch larger and more definitive studies, he adds.

For Stefano, the Italian addict, who spoke to *MIT Technology Review* by telephone, the results have already been life-changing. “It’s a new sensation for me—to have money in my pocket and not have to go out and buy cocaine,” he says. “It’s incredible. People are noticing I have changed.”

MIT Technology Review

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Colombia Finds What May Be World's Largest Sunken Treasure

2015-12-06

go.com

- By pedro mendoza and joshua goodman, associated press

CARTAGENA, Colombia — Dec 5, 2015, 8:28 PM ET

*The Associated Press*

President Juan Manuel Santos on Saturday hailed the discovery of a Spanish galleon that went down off the South American nation's coast more than 300 years ago with what may be the world's largest sunken treasure.

At a news conference in this colonial port city, Santos said the exact location of the

galleon San Jose, and how it was discovered with the help of an international team of experts, was a state secret that he'd personally safeguard. The ship sank somewhere in the wide area off Colombia's Baru peninsula, south of Cartagena.

While no humans have yet to reach the wreckage site, autonomous underwater vehicles had gone there and brought back photos of dolphin-stamped bronze cannons in a well-preserved state that leave no doubt to the ship's identity, the government said.

The discovery is the latest chapter in a saga that began three centuries ago, on June 8, 1708, when the galleon ship with 600 people aboard sank as it was trying to outrun a fleet of British warships. It is believed to have been carrying 11 million gold coins and jewels from then Spanish-controlled colonies that could be worth billions of dollars if ever recovered.

The ship, which maritime experts consider the holy grail of Spanish colonial shipwrecks, has also been the subject of a legal battle in the U.S., Colombia and Spain over who owns the rights to the sunken treasure.

In 1982, Sea Search Armada, a salvage company owned by U.S. investors including the late actor Michael Landon and convicted Nixon White House adviser John Ehrlichman, announced it had found the San Jose's resting place 700 feet below the water's surface.

Two years later, Colombia's government overturned well-established maritime law that gives 50 percent to whoever locates a shipwreck, slashing Sea Search's take to a 5 percent "finder's fee."

A lawsuit by the American investors in a federal court in Washington was dismissed in 2011 and the ruling was affirmed on appeal two years later. Colombia's Supreme Court has

ordered the ship to be recovered before the international dispute over the fortune can be settled.

Santos didn't mention any salvage company's claim during his presentation, but the government said the ship had been found Nov. 27 in a never-before referenced location through the use of new meteorological and underwater mapping studies.

Danilo Devis, who has represented Sea Search in Colombia for decades, expressed optimism that the sunken treasure, whose haul could easily be worth more than \$10 billion, would finally be recovered.

But he bristled at the suggestion that experts located the underwater grave anywhere different from the area adjacent to the coordinates Sea Search gave authorities three decades ago.

"The government may have been the one to find it but this really just reconfirms what we told them in 1982," he told The Associated Press from his home in Barranquilla, Colombia.

The president said any recovery effort would take years but would be guided by a desire to protect the national patrimony.

During his presentation, Santos showed an underwater video that appears to show jewels and the cannons. In the footage, English-speaking crew members aboard a Colombian naval ship can be seen launching the underwater vehicle into the ocean.

Associated Press writer Pedro Mendoza reported this story in Cartagena and AP writer Joshua Goodman reported from Caracas, Venezuela.

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Colombia says treasure-laden San Jose galleon found - BBC News bbc.com

• 5 December 2015



President Juan Manuel Santos described the find as "one of the greatest in history"

The wreck of a Spanish ship laden with treasure that was sunk by the British more than 300 years ago has been found off the Colombian coast, says President Juan Manuel Santos.

"Great news! We have found the San Jose galleon," the president tweeted.

The wreck was discovered near the port city of Cartagena.

It has been described as the holy grail of shipwrecks, as the ship was carrying one of the largest amounts of valuables ever to have been lost at sea.

Mr Santos said the cargo was worth at least \$1bn (£662m).

The San Jose was carrying gold, silver, gems and jewellery collected in the South American colonies to be shipped to Spain's king to help finance his war of succession against the British when it was sunk in June 1708.

The vessel was attacked by a British warship just outside Cartagena.

Colombian officials would not reveal the precise location of the wreck, but Mr Santos said the find "constitutes one of the greatest - if not the biggest, as some say - discoveries of submerged patrimony in the history of mankind".

He said that a museum would be built in Cartagena to house the ship's treasures.



The wreck was discovered last week



Map

Image copyright AFP

Ownership of the wreck has been the subject of a long-running legal row.

The Colombian government did not mention its long-running quarrel with US-based salvage company Sea Search Armada (SSA) over claims to the treasure.

A group now owned by SSA said in 1981 that it had located the area in which the ship sank.

SSA has been claiming billions of dollars for breach of contract from the Colombian government, but in 2011 an American court ruled that the galleon was the property of the Colombian state.

The San Jose

- English Commodore Charles Wager tracked down the treasure-laden ship 25km (16 miles) off Cartagena and it sank in 300m (1,000ft) of water
- In the fighting the vessel was reported to have exploded, with most of its crew killed
- The wreck is reported to fall within the UN's definition of an underwater cultural heritage site
- It is estimated that the San Jose is one of more than 1,000 galleons and merchant ships that sank along Colombia's coral reefs during more than three centuries of colonial rule

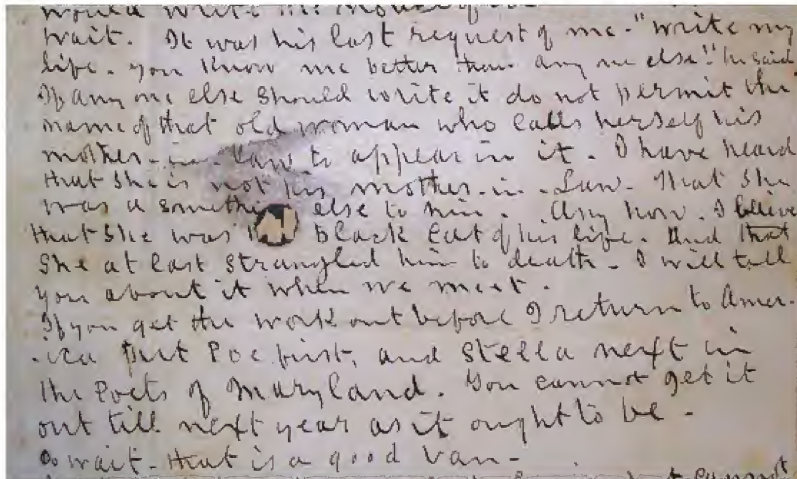
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November 30th, 2015 by chris

Tags: authors, Edgar Allan Poe, exhibits, poe, poetry

Posted in Collections and Registration, Education, Object of the Month | No Comments »



Stella Letter detail web

From the man who sneaked into his dead wife's crypt to spend the night on her corpse to the woman who believed she was in communication with Poe's spirit after his death, colorful characters seemed to flock to Edgar Allan Poe. But Stella stands out even among this crowd. It is said that, when he saw her approaching his front door, Poe fled through the back door to avoid her. She may have even convinced her husband to

pay Poe to write positive reviews of her work. In spite of that, she told Poe's biographer John Henry Ingram she had been Poe's good and trusted friend, and she boasted that she had been the inspiration for his poem "Annabel Lee." The Poe Museum now owns a strange letter she wrote to one of Poe's biographers. Because it reveals some entertaining insights in her personality and her relationship with Poe, we have named it the Poe Museum's Object of the Month.



Stella-web

Estelle Anna "Stella" Lewis (1824-1880) was a moderately successful writer and the wife of lawyer Sylvanus Lewis. She first became acquainted with Poe around 1846. She soon joined a group of Poe's female admirers in helping the poet, his mother-in-law Maria Clemm, and his gravely ill wife Virginia in a time of need. After Virginia's death in January 1847, Stella continued to visit Poe and his mother-in-law. According to Stella, she became his trusted confidant, but other sources believed she was really trying to bribe him to write complimentary reviews. Meanwhile, Stella's "trusted confidant" Poe wrote in a June 16, 1848 letter to Annie Richmond, "If she [Stella] comes here I shall refuse to see her."

Poe was close enough to Stella to write the following acrostic poem for her. The first letter of the first line, the second of the second, and so forth spell out her name.

"Seldom we find," says Solomon Don Dunce,

"Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.
 Through all the flimsy things we see at once
 As easily as through a Naples bonnet—
 Trash of all trash!—how can a lady don it?
 Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff—
 Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff
 Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it."
 And, veritably, Sol is right enough.
 The general tuckermanities are arrant
 Bubbles—ephemeral and so transparent—
 But this is, now,—you may depend upon it—
 Stable, opaque, immortal—all by dint
 Of the dear names that he concealed within't.

Unlike many of the poems Poe addressed to women, there is no hint of romance in this one. He also had this daguerreotype of himself made for her.



stella daguerreotypeweb

He gave Annie Richmond another, very similar, daguerreotype taken at the same session.

Stella later told John Henry Ingram, "I saw much of Mr. Poe during the last year of his life. He was one of the most sensitive and refined gentlemen I ever met. My girlish poem — 'The Forsaken' — made us acquainted. He had seen it floating the rounds of the press, and wrote to tell me how much he liked it: 'It is inexpressibly beautiful,' he said, 'and I should like much to know the young author.' After the first call he frequently dined with us, and passed the evening in playing whist or in reading to me his last poem."

On his last night in New York before starting his ill-fated trip to Richmond, Stella invited Poe and his mother-in-law to her home for dinner. As Stella told it, "The day before he left New York for Richmond," continues Stella, "Mr. Poe came to dinner, and stayed the night. He seemed very sad and retired early. On leaving the next morning he took my hand in his, and, looking in my face, said, 'Dear Stella, my much beloved friend. You truly understand and appreciate me — I have a presentiment that I shall never see you again. I must leave to-day for Richmond. If I never return, write my life. You can and will do me justice.' 'I will!' I exclaimed. And we parted to meet no more in this life. That promise I have not yet felt equal to fulfil." Poe died a few months afterwards. Stella died three decades later without fulfilling that promise.

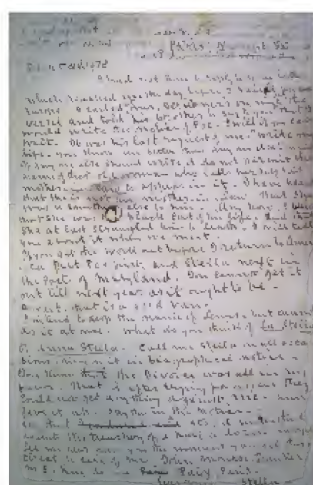
In the years following Poe's death, Stella invited his mother-in-law to live with her. It seems that, in order to endear herself to Stella, Mrs. Clemm told her she had been the inspiration for "Annabel Lee"—even though nothing in the poem suggests this. Stella almost immediately told her friends, and the rumor appeared in the papers not long after that. Another of Poe's friends, Frances Osgood, responded in the December 8, 1849 issue of Saroni's Musical

Times that Poe's wife was the only woman he had ever loved and was unquestionably the true subject of "Annabel Lee." Osgood continues, "I have heard it said that it was intended to illustrate a love affair of the author; but they who believe this, have in their dullness, evidently misunderstood or missed the beautiful meaning latent in the most lovely of all its verses..." Most people now agree with Osgood.

Poe's ex-fiancée Sarah Helen Whitman, however, (who also thought she had been the inspiration for "Annabel Lee") was so insulted by Stella's claim that she spread the rumor that a New York writer familiar with all the parties involved told her Maria Clemm had only been flattering Stella to repay some favors and that Osgood had invented the claim that Virginia was the real Annabel Lee solely to spite Stella. (In case you're counting, that's three possible Annabel Lees in this blog post.)

Just to make sure her role in Poe's life was recorded for posterity, she befriended his enemy and biographer Rufus W. Griswold. She still failed to convince the public she could have been the real Annabel Lee.

In 1858, Stella divorced her husband, began a feud with Maria Clemm (who apparently sided with Sylvanus Lewis in the divorce), accused another writer of stealing from her, and headed for Europe. About this time, Martin Van Buren Moore (1837-1900), a young reporter from Tennessee, wrote her for assistance in writing an article about Edgar Allan Poe. In her response, she boasts that Poe himself had entrusted her to be his biographer, calls Maria Clemm the "black cat" of Poe's life, talks about her divorce, and asks Moore if she should change her name to La Stella or Anna Stella. She eventually settled on the name Stella. Here is a photo of this note.



Stella Letter-web

The text of the letter reads:

Dear Van,

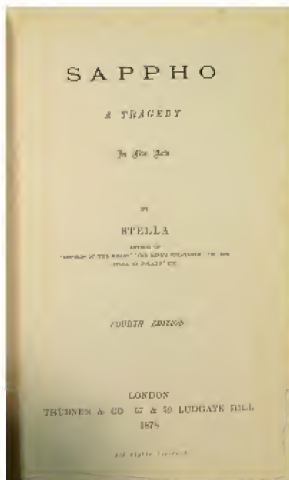
I had not time to reply to your [sic] letter which reached me the day before I sailed for Europe. I called at Mr. Scribner's on my way to the vessel and told his brother to say to you that I would write the notice of Poe—I will if you can wait. It was his last request of me— "Write my life—you know better than anyone else." he said. If any one else should write it do not permit the name of that old woman who calls herself his mother-in-law to appear in it. I have heard that she is not his mother-in-law—That she has something else on him. Any how. I believe that she was [the] black cat of his life. And that she strangled him to death. I will tell you about it when we meet. If you get the work out before

I return to America put Poe first, and Stella next in the Poets of Maryland. You cannot get it out till next year as it ought to be— do wait—that is a good Van.

I intend to drop the name of Lewis—but cannot do it at once—What do you think of La Stella or Anna Stella. Call me Stella on all occasions—ring on it in biographical notice—You know that the Divorce was all in my favor—That is after trying for a year they could not get anything against me—and gave it up—say this in the notice—say that I stood

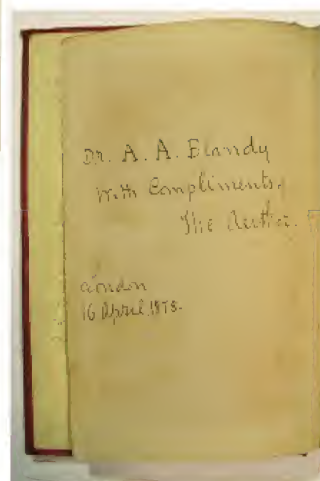
unscathed against the treachery of a half dozen Lawyers. Let me hear from you the moment you get this. Direct to care of Mr. John Monroe, Banker, no 5, Rue de La Paix, Paris—
Ever Yours
Stella

After leaving the United States, Stella meandered around Europe before settling in London around 1874. While there, she provided information about the poet to another of Poe's biographers John Henry Ingram. At the same time, Poe's nurse Marie Louise Shew and his fiancée Sarah Helen Whitman were also supplying Ingram sometimes contradictory accounts of their own relationships with Poe.



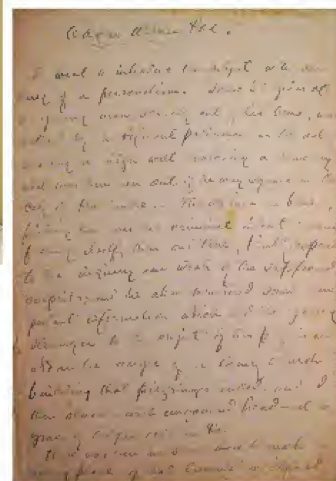
Stella Sappho 1878 web

Stella still found time to write poetry and plays. Her major works include the tragedies *Helémah, or the Fall of Montezuma* (1864) and *Sappho of Lesbos* (1868). The latter was printed in seven editions and translated into Greek to be performed in Athens. The Poe Museum owns an autographed copy of this, her most celebrated work. In 1865 she composed a series of sonnets about Poe. Her other works include *The Child of the Sea and other Poems* (1848), *The Myths of the Minstrel* (1852), *Poems* (1866) and *The King's Stratagem* (1869).



Stella Autograph-web

Stella died in London in 1880. By then, the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine deemed her the "Female Petrarch" while Ingram considered her merely a "harpy" who had preyed upon Poe in his final years.



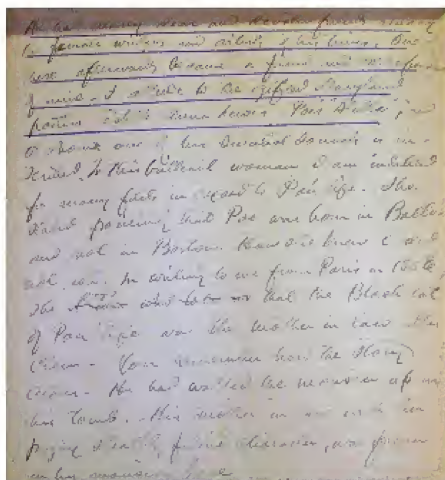
Martin Van Buren Moore Manuscript (1)A

Martin Van Buren Moore eventually wrote his essay about Poe. The manuscript for it is also in the Poe Museum's collection. His grandson Otis D. Smith of Richmond, Virginia donated both the Stella letter and the manuscript to the Museum in 1979 but kept the envelope because he thought

he might be able to sell it to a stamp collector.

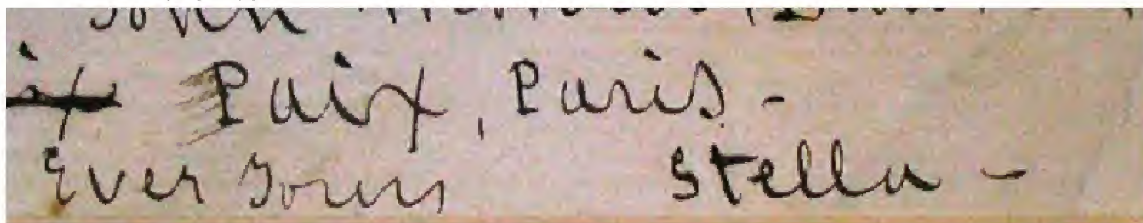
On this page from Moore's manuscript, he acknowledges the assistance of the "brilliant" Stella to whom he is "indebted for many of the facts in regards to Poe's life" that were used in

the essay. Among these facts, he continues, "She stated positively that Poe was born in Baltimore and not in Boston." Click [here](#) to find out where Poe was really born.



Martin Van Buren Moore Manuscript
(6a)cropped

While the Poe Museum owns a number of Edgar Allan Poe's letters, most visitors do not realize the collection also holds several rarely seen letters from the people in his life. While these are rarely anthologized and seldom read, they nevertheless provide valuable insights into Poe's life and work as seen by his contemporaries. Since this Stella letter was written to a person researching an article about Poe, the document reveals the way in which Poe's biography was shaped (or distorted) by the biases and self-interests of the people who knew him as they provided information of varying quality to his biographers.



Stella-signature-web

Poe Museum	info@poemuseum.org	
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Richmond, VA 23223	1-888-21E-APOE 1-888-21E-APOE FREE	

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Crews work on water line at center of Wednesday's earthquakes

NEW MADRID COUNTY, MO (KFVS) -

kfvs12.com



Posted: Nov 25, 2015 1:46 PM PST Updated: Nov 25, 2015 2:39 PM PST

William Kosky Sr. and his son were installing a water line at the New Madrid County Airport on Wednesday.

• **12 earthquakes shake near Marston, MO early Wednesday morning**

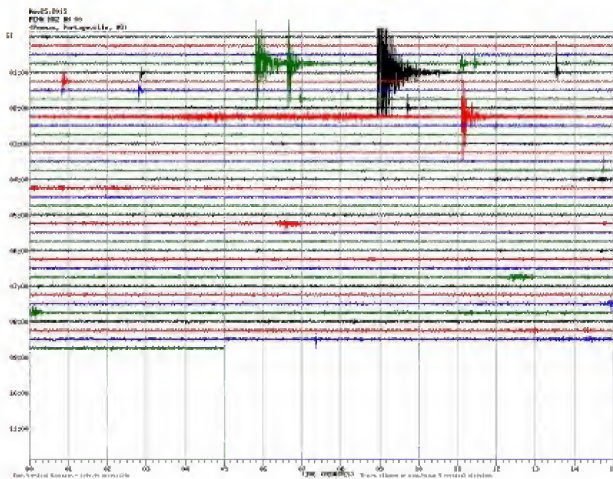
Residents in southeast Missouri might have felt

the ground shake when 12 earthquakes rattled within hours of each other on Wednesday.

All the quakes were located just northeast of Marston and south of Lilbourn.



(Source: Mike Mohunda/KFVS)



Time	Magnitude	Location	Depth
12:50 a.m.	2.9	1.14 miles north of Marston, MO	4.5 miles
12:51 a.m.	2.6	1.12 miles north of Marston, MO	5.3 miles
12:56 a.m.	2.1	1.02 miles north of Marston, MO	3.1 miles
12:56 a.m.	2.0	1.08 miles north of Marston, MO	5.1 miles
1:02 a.m.	1.7	1.19 miles north of Marston, MO	4.8 miles
1:08 a.m.	3.0	1.46 miles north of Marston, MO	5.4 miles
1:15 a.m.	1.8	1.39 miles north of Marston, MO	4.7 miles
1:32 a.m.	2.0	1.84 miles north of Marston, MO	5 miles
1:51 a.m.		1.09 miles north of Marston, MO	4.8 miles

a.m.	1.6	of Marston, MO	miles
2:09		1.08 miles north	5.3
a.m.	1.6	of Marston, MO	miles
2:09		1.07 miles	3.1
a.m.	1.4	northeast of	miles
		Marston, MO	
2:26		1.29 miles north	5.3
a.m.	2.6	of Marston, MO	miles

People in Risco, Dexter, Matthews, and New Madrid said they felt the quakes.

"[I] felt it in New Madrid sounded like a big clash of thunder & a little shake happened like a semi truck passing by," Mark Kientzy said in a comment on Facebook.

A man and his son were installing a water line at the New Madrid Airport on Wednesday, right in the center of the quakes. While William Kosky, Jr. said he didn't feel any while he was working, he said he felt several on Tuesday night at his home.

New Madrid County, Missouri has a shaky history, with the most violent series of earthquakes ever recorded in the United States hitting in New Madrid in about a seven week stretch between 1811 and 1812, according to the USGS.

Check out the earthquake map from the Center for Earthquake Research and Information.



• **New Madrid County's shaky history**

Wednesday, November 25 2015 7:00 PM EST2015-11-26 00:00:13 GMT
over 1 hour ago
Nov 25, 2015 4:00 PM PST

At least a dozen earthquakes were reported in New Madrid County Mo. on Wednesday, November 25, and while many of the tremors were small in scale the area has a shaky history.

At least a dozen earthquakes were reported in New Madrid County Mo. on Wednesday, November 25, and while many of the tremors were small in scale the area has a shaky history.

The location was right smack in the middle of where a dozen earthquakes rattled the area early Wednesday morning.

All of the quakes happened on the land of the New Madrid County Airport or nearby.

"Having 12 of them, all right here in the same field, that's real unusual," William Kosky Jr. said.

Some of the quakes were a few hundred yards away from where they were working, while others were just a couple dozen feet away.

"We wasn't expecting to be in the same field as where the earthquakes centered at," Kosky Sr. said.

Kosky Sr. said while he hasn't felt any while he was working on Wednesday, he said he felt several on Tuesday night at his home.

"I was laying in bed and it hit and I thought it broke the bed down," Kosky Sr. said. "I thought the bed broke completely down as hard as it hit. I mean it just was a real hard thud. And it wasn't too long later

when we had another hard thud. I said to myself, those are earthquakes is what them are."

Kosky Jr. said he was at home when his dog started acting strange, hiding under a pillow. He said his dog did this several times before each quake hit.

The Koskys say it's not uncommon for quakes to hit in this area, but say it's very uncommon that so many happened in one day.

"It doesn't really concern me," Kosky Jr. said. "We've had small shakes all the time. The big one, it's not a matter of if but when but as long as we keep having these small ones, it kind of relieves some of the pressure."

The Koskys said they feel it's good in a way that these little quakes are happening to help relieve some of the pressure on the fault line.

They said they are also concerned that this might be a precursor to a bigger quake.

"We can stand these 12 little jolts," Kosky Sr. said. "They didn't hurt nothing. They just kind of makes us pay attention of what's going on around us."

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Scotland Yard's Grisly Crime Museum Opens to Public After 140 Years

nbcnews.com

LONDON — Scotland Yard's "black museum" — a repository for some of British crime's most morbid artifacts — has opened to the public for the first time in 140 years.

The Crime Museum exhibits evidence, weapons and various objects implicated in the most infamous criminal investigations in London stretching as far back as the 1820s.

The private museum, founded in the 1870s, was originally used as a teaching collection for police recruits and was only ever accessible to cops or those involved in legal matters.



Medicine case from around 1892 that belonged to poisoner and Jack the Ripper suspect Dr. Neil Cream. Museum of London

The exhibit include the spade used by Dr. Hawley Crippen to bury his wife Cora after he murdered her, a medicine case belonging to poisoner and Jack the Ripper suspect Dr. Neil Cream and the revolver used by Ruth Ellis — the last woman to be executed in the U.K.

Image: Medicine case belonging to poisoner and Jack the Ripper suspect Dr Neil Cream

The museum gives remarkable insight into how crime and policing has evolved over the years.

But while the implements and methods may have changed, curator Jackie Keily said common threads remain.

"Some crimes don't change," Keily told NBC News. "They are often about things like greed, jealousy — those kinds of basic human emotions."

Keily said some people would find parts of the collection "upsetting," and for that reason not every object was on show.

"We decided we wouldn't display any human remains," Keily said. "And we also decided that we wouldn't look at any cases in detail after 1975."

The Metropolitan Police's Crime Museum at New Scotland Yard in 2015. Museum of London
Katie Wong

Topics World, Crime & Courts, Europe

First Published Nov 22 2015, 12:41 am ET

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Image: The Metropolitan Police's Crime Museum at New Scotland Yard

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Crocs snapped in waterhole death match

about 4 hours ago Mon 30 Nov 2015, 7:00pm

abc.net.au



Photo: The crocodile battle was seen at Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park. (Supplied: Sandra Bell/Queensland National Parks)

Two saltwater crocodiles have been photographed in a duel to the death in a remote Queensland waterhole.

The pictures, taken in the Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park in North Queensland, show a big saltie grabbing a smaller reptile in its jaws and shaking it in the air.

The final photo shows the smaller croc disappearing down the larger reptile's gullet.

The photos were taken at the park's Catfish Waterhole.

Queensland National Parks said the incident occurred a few hundred metres from a sign warning about crocodiles, and have urged people to continue to keep safety in mind when in croc country.

First posted Mon 30 Nov 2015, 4:15pm

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Cogita

mori



Ipsæ iubet mortis te quærimus Deus.

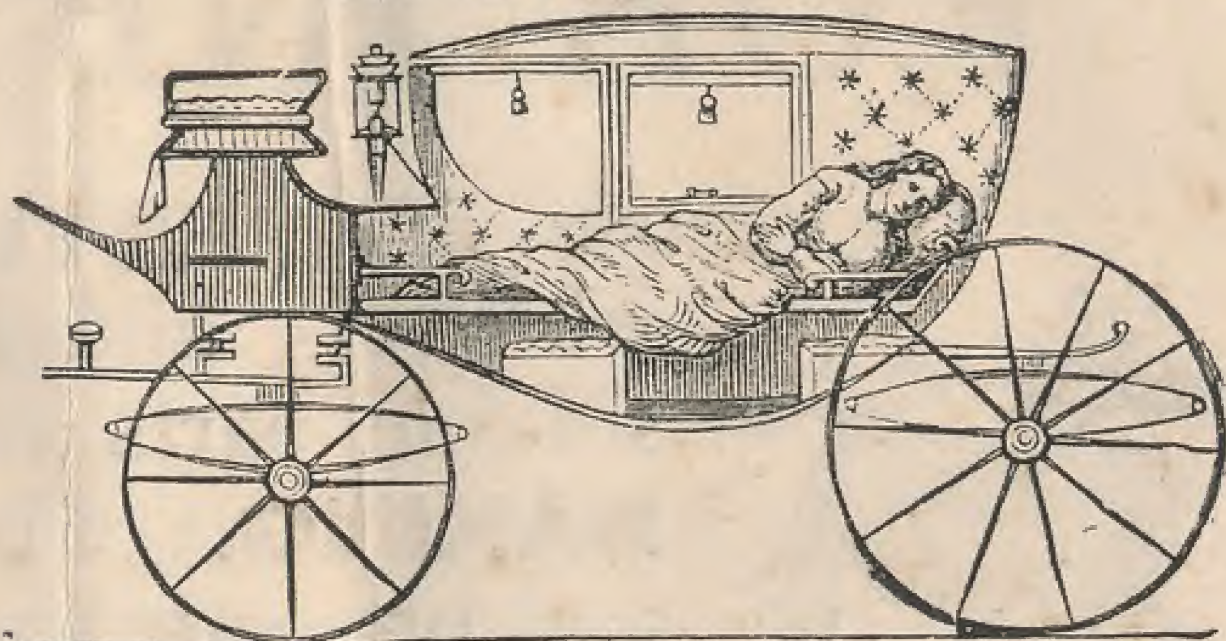
Ora caput, nares, oculos, et brachia, ventrem
In price tam turpem te tua fata dabunt.

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W. A. H. 111111

PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND HIS SON THADDEUS.

THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH THE PRESIDENT GAVE FOR



In Loving Memory of



BETTY,

Widow of George Webster,

Born Feb^y 25th. 1790.

Died June 14th. 1896.

She was for nearly 40 Years a Member
of the Almshouses in this Parish and
during her long Life of 106 Years was
greatly respected by all who knew her.

Search the Scriptures for in them
ye shall find ye have eternal life.

Monday, 16 November 2015

Over the summer I bought a small book of Derbyshire ghost stories. Whilst flicking through I came across a tale that caught my attention relating to Tupton Hall near Chesterfield. Today there is a school on the site where the old hall used to stand, but it was once an opulent country estate in the possession of the prosperous Lord family. According to the legend, Mr Lord, a wealthy Chesterfield miller:

"Was returning home one evening when he was waylaid and robbed by a masked highwayman. He was convinced that it was the family coachman, and, although the poor man swore his innocence, Mr Lord had him tried, convicted and hanged."

The kick to the story comes in the ending, as we are told ominously:

"Just before his execution, the man swore a curse on the family and predicted that disaster after disaster would follow."



A fascinating albeit rather standard ghost story to be sure, and I experienced the shiver that the writer intended. As with so many stories however I was left with the desire to know what, if any, truth lay behind it. After some digging and exchange of emails with a very helpful gentleman from the Tupton Local History Society, the following came to light, through a piece in the *Derby Mercury*, dated Thursday, 27th December, 1739.

We hear from Chesterfield, that on Saturday night last, Mr Lord of Temple Normanton, near the said Town, going from Chesterfield Market, was attack'd by a single Highwayman on his Return Home, who robb'd him of 10l and two Gold Rings; and that about a Quarter of an hour after Mr Tag of the same Place, with his Wife behind him, returning from the said Market, was also robb'd by the same Highwayman; and that a grey mare belonging to -- Pyot Esq; of Highfield near Chesterfield, was taken out of a Stable at the Angel Inn there, the same Night, which was thought (by the Description given) to be the same the highwayman was mounted on; Mr Pyot, upon sending his Servants out to search for her, found her turn'd up, and in the Road Home with Bridle and Saddle on."

It would seem that this was indeed the Mr Lord mentioned in the tale of the Tupton Curse; Temple Normanton was only about a mile from Tupton, and it is likely that Mr Lord was returning from Chesterfield to Tupton Hall when the attack occurred. The report ends with the information that a man named Dolphin had been taken in under suspicion of being involved in

the crime, having been tried at the last Lent Assizes for "*stealing one Moydore and 3l. 1s. from Mr Inman of Chesterfield.*" Although he was acquitted of the previous crime, the man had now been committed to the Chesterfield House of Correction for questioning over the theft from Mr Lord.



Tupton Hall, c.1800

A series of relations in the *Derby Mercury* for 1740 adds further details. On 27th March it is related that at the Assizes that lasted the previous Friday, three people were sentenced to death; Samuel Gilbert, for the crime of stealing a black mare, and:

"William Dolphin and James Hill for Robbing Mr Lord near

Chesterfield on the Highway, of a considerable Sum of Money."

Richard Thompson and Joseph Baron were also suspected of being involved with the robbery, but were acquitted. Whilst James Hill and Samuel Gilbert were granted a reprieve, William Dolphin was not so fortunate, the sentence standing, and the report ends with the information that:

"The Rev. Mr. Christie intends to preach next Sunday about 4 o'Clock in the Afternoon, in the Debtor's Apartment, to the Prisoner under Sentence of Death."

The Derby Mercury for 3rd April contains the announcement that William Dolphin was to be executed the following Wednesday, and that:

"He still persists in denying the Crime for which he is to suffer, and declares himself to be as innocent as the Child unborn."

A week later on the 10th April the same paper carried the information of William Dolphin's final days and execution. Dolphin; aged thirty-three, unmarried, "well-proportioned, and seemingly of a strong and healthy Constitution," was apparently extremely diligent in his prayers during his imprisonment, resisted every attempt of the various clergy members and guards who attended him to extract a confession, the prisoner remaining steadfastly silent on the matter other than to say that he was innocent. As the time approached:

"After Service he stayed some small time to take Leave of his Relations, then walk'd to the Place of Execution, betwixt two Clergyman, Reading all the Way."

Dolphin was asked again for a final time if he had committed the crime for which he was to die, or if he knew who had or anyone who had anything to do with the matter, the grave peril of dying with a guilty conscience gravely impressed upon him. They were to be disappointed

however as:

"To all which he declar'd he was innocent, and knew nothing more of it than by the Noise of the Country."

The condemned man then took the time to warn any young people present to take his example as a warning and to avoid bad company, and also to declare that he forgave everyone completely.

"Then leaping into the Cart, he stripp'd off his Coat with Seeming Courage, and being ty'd up forgave the Executioner, after which the Cart was drawn away."



Any further details of William Dolphin's end are omitted, the account ending with the final remark that his body was interred in St. Peter's Churchyard.

Another intriguing piece of information was the revelation that James Hill, Dolphin's supposed accomplice, had sworn that:

"... the said Dolphin, chang'd Coats with him, and was the

Person that robb'd Mr Lord, and that he (Hill) was ordered by Dolphin to stand behind a Hedge near the Place where the Robbery was committed, that so if any Resistance was made, he might come up to Dolphin's assistance."

Whatever the truth of the matter, James Hill did not escape punishment entirely: a final account in the *Derby Mercury* for 6th August relates that both Sam Gilbert and James Hill had been ordered to be transported for fourteen years after their "reprieve."

The Mr Lord who was the victim of the robbery was in fact William Allwood Lord Esq, son of William Lord and Jane Allwood. A local man, he married Dorothy Gladwin on 26th June, 1738. Dorothy was the daughter of Lemuel Gladwin senior, who was in turn the son of Thomas Gladwin who built Tupton Hall in 1611, and the marriage of Dorothy and William Lord marked the passing of Tupton Hall out of Gladwin hands and into the Lord family. (Lemuel Senior's son had died without children, and so the hall passed through his daughter's line.)

The Reverend James Christie who preached before William Dolphin's execution was also not without scandal attached to his name; in 1741 a poem was published with the title *The Polygamist: or, the lustful priest, Giving an account of one James Christie, a clergyman, who is now confin'd in Derby jail, for having two wives*. It was not the first time he had been imprisoned for the offence either, having been likewise confined in 1738 when his marital shenanigans caught up with him.



Tupton Hall - as it was between 1928 and 1938

And what of the curse? There is no mention of it in the newspaper accounts dealing with the case, on the contrary, it was reported that William Dolphin forgave everyone involved, and it would be unlikely that such a juicy detail as a vow of vengeance would have been omitted by the press. There is also no mention of Dolphin having been William Lord's coachman, and this "fact" could likely have been a later addition to the legend.

It cannot be disputed however that Tupton Hall saw its share of tragedy in the years that followed. The Lord family line eventually died out, and the hall was purchased and turned into a grammar school, only to suffer a severe fire two years later in 1938. 1955 saw not only the suicide by hanging of Charles Oswald Drabble, the school's headmaster, but also, shortly after, the death of Miss Bansall, mathematics and science mistress of Tupton Hall after she fell or threw herself under a train at Chesterfield Station. A further fire in 1974 and more damage caused by a falling tree in 1990 only served to fuel the rumours of the curse set many years before. Despite this, Tupton Hall School is currently one of the largest secondary schools in North East Derbyshire, and one of the largest six forms in the county.

159 death sentences were passed in Derbyshire between 1735 and 1799. Thirty-five of these were actually carried out, including that of William Dolphin.

I am deeply indebted to Trevor John Armstrong of the Tupton Local History Society, who has provided much of the information above and taken the time to share his findings.

Newspaper quotes Derby Mercury, 27th December 1739, 27th March, 3rd April, 10th April, 6th August. © The British Newspaper Archive

Posted by Willow C Winsham at 01:32

© Willow Winsham and The Witch, The Weird, and The Wonderful

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SWINBURN ISLAND—ALL SUSPECTS ARE TRANSFERRED TO THIS ISLAND TO AWAIT DEVELOPMENT OF DISEASE.



ISLAND—WHERE EMIGRANTS ARE SENT WHEN AFFLICTED WITH CONTAGIOUS DISEASES. THE LAST BUILDING IN
GROUND IS THE CREMATORY.

Et sicut insula inq̃ nascunt̃ homines q̃rum
oculi sicut lucerna lucunt ÷



Est et alia insula in brixonia ad meridiem
in qua nascuntur homines sine capite: qui
in pectore habent oculos & os alia sunt pedu-
um. & alii simili modo pedu-um :-

One iroder ealand rad ppa. brixonia
on þam beoð menn akeride buzarihtap-
dum. þa habbað on bueorcum heora
eagan jenuð hi sýridan eahta foralange
jeahra for a bjade :-



Nascuntur et ibi dracones longitudine
habentes. et pedu-um uastitudine colunarum.
propter multitudinem draconum nemo facile
adire potest transflumen :-

Der beoð dracan hende ða beoð on leng-
hundreontiges for mæla. 7 þiriges
lange 7 beoð grette 7 pa ræne ne 7 7esne
micle forðara dracena mecln 7 7e
menig mann naht eadlice on þ land
geþan mæg :-



Cott. Tib. B v

f56 v



Tas brixonem flumen ad orientē nascunt
homines longi & magni habentes fymora &
fyras. en. pedu laara cum peccore. vi. pe
dum colore nigro q̄s hostes nre appellat.
Mā q̄s nūq̄ capiunt comedunt.
Begondan brixonem dāpē ea tūc dānon
beodmen accende lange p̄micle þa habbað
p̄c p̄p̄mcan p̄p̄p̄ora lange p̄idan mid
p̄p̄p̄mcan p̄p̄p̄ora lange hi beoð p̄p̄p̄
ter hūp̄er þu p̄p̄idan hōp̄er nēnde.
Cudlice p̄p̄a hūp̄lene maru p̄p̄a hūp̄p̄od
p̄onne p̄p̄etad hi hūne.

Sunt & alie bestiolae mibrixonē quae
leraces apellatur aurib: asinū suellere
ouino pedib: ouum.

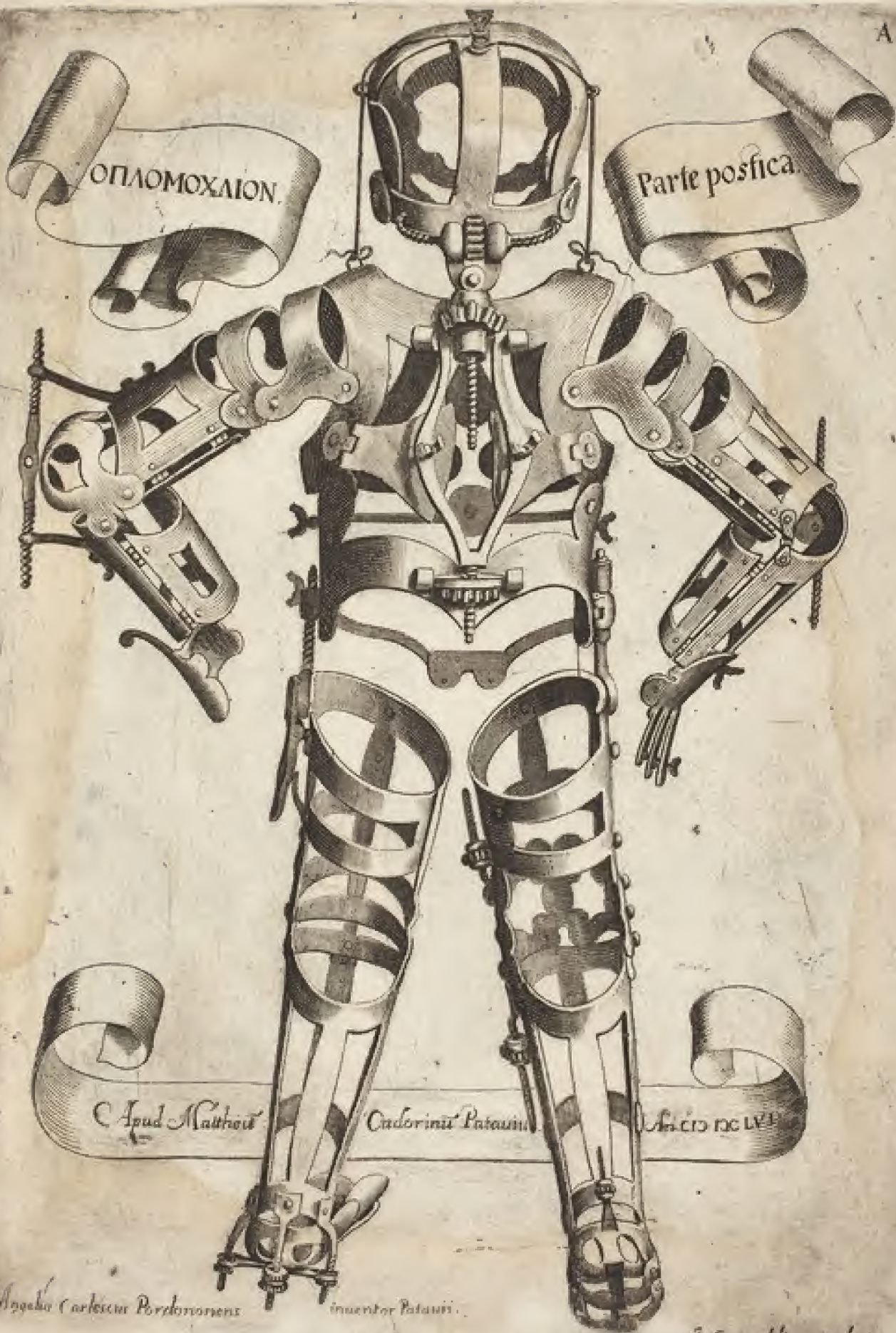
Honne p̄p̄ndon on brixonē p̄ldeop̄
p̄ahattan leuicey hi habbað coyley
cūan. p̄p̄p̄er p̄ulle. p̄p̄p̄er p̄er.











ΟΠΛΟΜΟΧΑΙΟΝ.

Parte posfica.

C. Apud Matthiæ

Cadorini Patavini

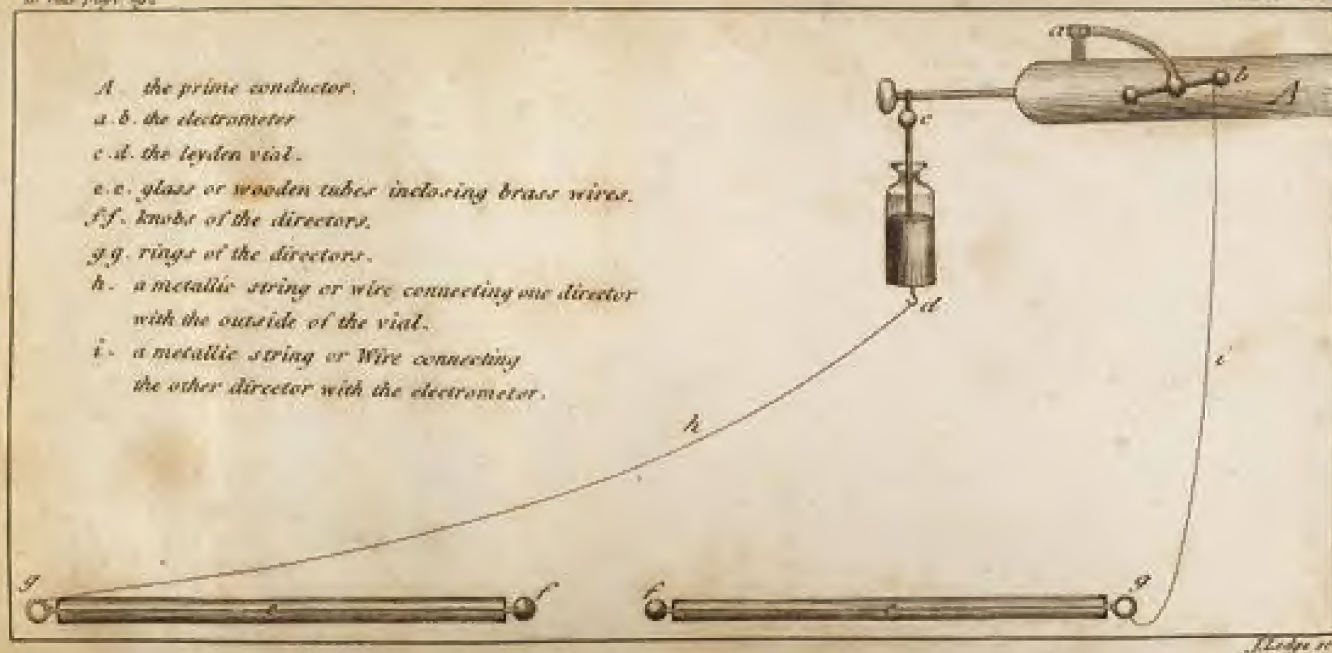
Anno 1664

Angelus Carlesius Porcimonensis

inventor Patavini.

Jo. Georg. delin. et sculpit

- A*. the prime conductor.
a. b. the electrometer
c. d. the leyden vial.
e. e. glass or wooden tubes inclosing brass wires.
f. f. knobs of the directors.
g. g. rings of the directors.
h. a metallic string or wire connecting one director
 with the outside of the vial.
i. a metallic string or wire connecting
 the other director with the electrometer.



NOISY, HUNGRY FROGS SADDEN FARMER'S LIFE

**They Scare His Cattle and They
Also Eat His Flannel
Shirt.**

SEPTIMA
MUSCULO-
RVM TABV-
LA.





Fortune muer de balaille



Deuileur et d'affliction
Mectre me fure en ma jeunesse
Mon estude et mon entencion
De faire un romans sur beas
Que on dit deconsolacion
Quandenne confort et l'esse
Reculp qui l'ont tribulacion

Rusez et cause plus pour quoy
Le romances re romans faire
C'est une dame que le boy
A qui fortune a este courtoise
Conforter la bueil et la doye
Et son cuer enuier d'un aduier
Et priens d'un lequissus oye
Que le romans le pueit plainre

Entrauons nest pas p'ement
Nul ney l'ont auen deplaisance
Pour ce qu'on mon aduierement
Ne me put pas mouire nuisance
Nes s'achet bien courtoisement
Qu'il content assez la fustance
Respice d'ulme d'ouement
Et d'oumes la signfiance

Regarde bien la l'ame tout
Qu'il n'est pas l'opex a entendre
N'est pas en romans mot auot
Et l'ont ne le pouruient p'ender
Et si ainsi effort ne me vult
Que l'oy ne me p'ust l'p'ander
Pour ce luy me fust bien
Et que ma rusey p'ust comprendre

Et ney pas honte dit
Qu'il n'ait pas contaire
Nes ay luy garde le secret





Deus secundum philosophum tercio est
corum omnium terribilium more corporis sic
terribilissima mora tamen anime
nullatenus est comparanda. ¶ Este
augustinus qui ait. ¶ Maius est dap
num in amissione vnius anime quam
in morte corporis. ¶ Este etiam bernardus qui dicit. ¶ Cor

Memorare novissima et in eternum
non peccabis. Ecclesiastes 7.









Remota de la
pul barba ant
cha precum.
rosa dans oto
rem florens in
perpetuum an
te creatorem.

Ora pro nobis beata uirgo et martir
xpi barba. Ut digni efficiamur p

Dpmissionib; xpi. Orem? orō
A nobis q's om̃ps deus pela
nis precibus et mentis beate barba
re. gloriose uirginis et martiris tue
a qualibet molestia corporali felicit
nos defendi. et ab omnib; necebus
cūctorū p̃torū nōrū misericordie libe
rari. nec non ante finē mortis nre
sac̃menta ecclesiastica cum sincera
fide pura q; confessione ac cu; dig
na satisfactione p̃cipies fieri. et in





1946-1970-26/6.

Gora and Gornax. Their first day of "freedom" on Tower Green.

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Avoid Raw Vegetables and Unripe Fruit !.

Abstain from COLD WATER, when heated, and above all from *Ardent Spirits*, and if habit have rendered them indispensable, take much less than usual.



HWTT
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CNS. J. M. April 1981, 10
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE









THE MOUSTACHE MOVEMENT.

"MY EYE, TOM. WHAT A 'ORRID BORE IT MUST BE FOR THE HORFICER SWELLS, NOW WE'VE TOOK TO WEARIN' OUR MOOSTARSHERS. THE GALS CAN'T TELL HUS FROM THEM, NOW!"

MARY CHRISTMAS

JULY 15, 1876

JAN. 15, 1957

MOTHER OF TED

Settled by Marriage.

The pending bastardy suit of Miss Mary Ellen Dillon, of east North street, against Will Butler was settled this morning by the marriage of the parties by Father Sidley, of St. Raphael's Catholic church. The young woman will be remembered as the mother of the queerly-deformed child, about which there was so much controversy at the time in the city papers.

Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

Daring Corpse Attempts Train Escape (1910)



This morbidly amusing headline reminded me of the supposed corpses I wrote about on The Dead Bell, but only for a second. It's a bit of a stretch to think that a body could remain in suspended animation for four months, especially in 1910. The story is about a man who was really dead, appearing to rise from his coffin while being shipped across the country for burial during hot weather. Personal details about the corpse are omitted from the article so the reason why there was a four-month interval in between the time of death and burial is open for speculation. Perhaps the man had died and he wasn't discovered or his identity was unknown for several months. When he was originally embalmed would also be interesting to know, even though people who witnessed him "get up" didn't think he'd been embalmed properly. States had public health laws in regards to shipping corpses on trains that governed aspects such as how the body was embalmed, the type of coffin in which it was shipped, and the time it would take to get to its final destination. Many railroad companies required a living person to purchase a ticket (in addition to the "corpse ticket" for the body) and also make the trip to assume liability for the body. This article doesn't mention whether or not there was anyone on the train who knew the deceased.

"MAN, FOUR MONTHS DEAD, TRIES TO GET OUT OF COFFIN"

With an eastbound Santa Fe passenger train running at full speed out of Needles yesterday the express agent and baggagemen were so badly scared by the movements of a corpse in the baggage car that they would have deserted the car had it not been what is known as a blind baggage, according to the statement of a passenger who arrived last night, says the Prescott Courier. The corpse was being shipped from California to Ohio for interment. The body was that of a man who died four months ago.

Soon after the train pulled out of Needles the occupants of the baggage car saw the lid of

the box encasing the remains move, although it was sealed in the usual way. Aware that the man had been dead four months they were surprised at seeing such remarkable signs of life. After recovering from the first shock they approached closer to the coffin casing and were further surprised to see the lid slowly rising from the box as if being pushed up by the strength of the body in the coffin. With the lid open the corpse continued to rise until almost in a standing position before the next station was reached, where with the aid of the trainmen the body was pushed back into its place and unloaded at the depot to be further prepared for shipment to its last resting place.

Passengers who saw the body claim that it was not scientifically prepared for shipment, judging from the odor, and that the box containing the coffin was not hermetically sealed strong enough to comply with the rules governing the shipment of corpses. The queer action of the corpse is believed to have been provoked by the warm weather prevailing in Needles and vicinity."

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/ Copyright 2014 Evernote Corporation. All rights reserved. */.en-markup-crop-options { top: 18px !important; left: 50% !important; margin-left: -100px !important; width: 200px !important; border: 2px rgba(255,255,255,.38) solid !important; border-radius: 4px !important; }.en-markup-crop-options div div:first-of-type { margin-left: 0px !important; }*

Conspiracy theories of a secretive power elite seeking global domination have long held a place in the modern imagination. Mike Jay explores the idea's beginnings in the writings of John Robison, a Scottish scientist who maintained that the French revolution was the work of a covert Masonic cell known as the Illuminati.



Representation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789 painted by Jean-Jacques-François Le Barbier in 1789. His depiction includes the "eye of providence" and also the red Phrygian cap, two symbols associated with freemasonry.

At the beginning of 1797, John Robison was a man with a solid and long-established reputation in the British scientific establishment. He had been Professor of Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh University for over twenty years, an authority on mathematics and optics; he had recently been appointed senior scientific contributor on the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, to which he would contribute over a thousand pages of articles. Yet by the end of the year his professional reputation had been eclipsed by a sensational book that vastly outsold anything he had previously written, and whose shockwaves would continue to reverberate long after his scientific work had been forgotten. Its title was *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of Europe*, and it launched on the English-speaking public the enduring theory

that a vast conspiracy, masterminded by a covert Masonic cell known as the Illuminati, was in the process of subverting all the cherished institutions of the civilised world into instruments of its secret and godless plan: the tyranny of the masses under the invisible control of unknown superiors, and a new era of 'darkness over all'.

The first edition of *Proofs of a Conspiracy* sold out within days, and within a year it had been republished many times, not only in Edinburgh but in London, Dublin and New York. Robison had hit a nerve by offering an answer to the great questions of the day: what had caused the French Revolution, and what had driven its bloody and tumultuous progress? From his vantage point in Edinburgh he had, along with millions of others, followed with horror the reports of France dismembering its monarchy, dispossessing its church and transforming its downtrodden and brutalised population into the most ruthless fighting force Europe had ever seen – and now, under the rising star of the young general Napoleon Bonaparte, attempting to export the carnage and destruction to its surrounding monarchies, not least Britain itself. But Robison believed that he alone had identified the hidden hand responsible for the apparently senseless eruption of terror and war that now appeared to be consuming the world.

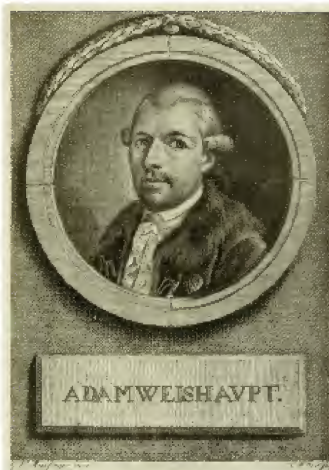
Many had located the roots of the revolution in the ideas of Enlightenment figures such as



La Liberté ou la Mort (1795) by Jean-Baptiste Regnault. Note the red Phrygian cap, a symbol of the French revolution also associated by some with Freemasonry – Source .

Voltaire, Diderot and Condorcet, who had exalted reason and progress over authority and tradition; but none of these mostly aristocratic philosophes had advocated a revolution of the masses, and indeed several of them had ended their lives on the guillotine. In the early 1790s it had been possible to believe that the power-hungry lawyers and journalists of the Jacobin Club had whipped up the Paris mob into their destructive frenzy for their own ends, but by 1794 Danton, Robespierre and the rest of the Jacobin leaders had followed their victims to the guillotine: how could they have been the puppet-masters when they had had their own strings so brutally cut? What Robison was proposing in the meticulously documented pages of *Proofs of a Conspiracy* was that all these agents of revolution had been pawns in a much bigger game, with ambitions that were only just beginning to make themselves visible.

The French Revolution, like all convulsive world events before and since, had been full of conspiracies, bred by the speed of events, the panic of those caught up in them and the limited information available to them as they unfolded. In Britain, enemies of the revolution such as Edmund Burke had claimed from the beginning that 'already confederacies and correspondences of the most extraordinary nature are forming in several countries', and by 1797 most believed – and with good reason – that secret societies in Ireland were plotting with Napoleon to overthrow the British government and invade the mainland. The power of Robison's revelation was that it identified within the buzzing confusion of conspiracies a single protagonist, a single ideology and a single overarching plot that crystallised the chaos into an epic struggle between good and evil, whose outcome would define the future of world politics.

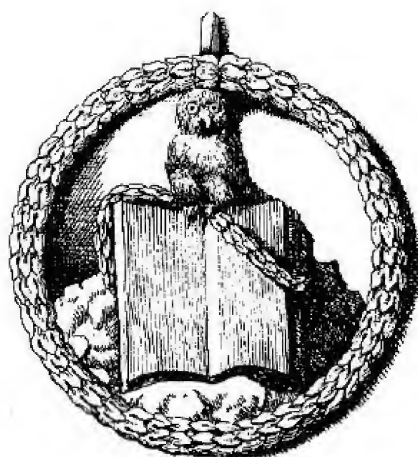


Portrait of Adam Weishaupt featured in Cagliostro: the splendour and misery of a master of magic (1910) by W.R.H. Trowbridge – Source .

Robison's vast conspiracy needed an imposing figurehead, a role for which Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Bavarian Order of the Illuminati, seemed on the surface to be an unpromising candidate. Obsessive and domineering, Weishaupt had from the beginning found difficulty in attracting members to his secret society, where they were expected to adopt mystical pseudonyms chosen by him, jump through the hoops of his strict initiatic grades – Novice and Minerval, Illuminatus Minor and Major, Dirigens and Magus – and take up subservient roles in his grandiose but unfocused crusade for world domination. After 1784, when the Order had been exposed and banned by the Elector of Bavaria, Weishaupt had exiled himself to Gotha in central Germany, since when he appeared to have done little beyond producing a series of morose and self-justifying memoirs of his adventures.

Yet there was much in the career of the Illuminati that offered, to Robison at least, a view of a far more expansive and sinister scheme. Weishaupt's messianic sense of his own mission and the Order's extravagant

structures hinted at a far larger organisation than that which had been exposed, and its suppression had generated a furore quite out of proportion to the danger it represented. It had become a lightning-rod for the deep anxieties of church and monarchy about the agenda of reason and progress that was being seeded across Europe by the confident vanguard of philosophers and scientists. The Illuminati furore had generated hundreds of screeds, polemics, handbills and scandal sheets, all competing to file the most damning charges of godless infamy. It was these sources that Robison had spent years perusing intently for anecdotes and allegations to mould into the proofs of the conspiracy that he now presented. To the dispassionate observer, Weishaupt and his Illuminati might have offered an eloquent metaphor for the forces that were reconfiguring Europe, but for Robison they had become the literal cause: the centre, thus far invisible, of the web of events that had consumed the world.



The original insignia of the Bavarian Illuminati: the owl of Minerva, symbolising wisdom, on top of an opened book – Source .

Robison may have been a distant spectator of the Illuminati furore, but he was no dispassionate observer. While *Proofs of a Conspiracy* came as a surprise (and in most cases an embarrassment) to his friends and scientific colleagues, there were many reasons why the Illuminati had presented itself to him in this form. His discovery resolved long-standing suspicions and conflicts in both his private and professional life, and chimed in particular with his own curious adventures in freemasonry.

By 1797 Robison's character had taken a grave and saturnine turn, far removed from the cheerful and convivial temperament of his youth. In 1785 he had begun to suffer from a mysterious medical condition, a severe and painful spasm of the groin: it seemed to emanate from beneath his testicles, but its precise origin baffled the most distinguished doctors of Edinburgh and London. Racked with pain and frequently bed-ridden, by the late 1790s he had become a withdrawn and isolated figure; he was using opium frequently, a regime which according to some of his acquaintances made him vulnerable to melancholy, confusion and paranoia. As the successive crises of the French Revolution shook Britain, the panic was particularly intense in Scotland, where ministers and judges whipped up constant rumours of fifth columnists and secret Jacobin cells. Tormented, heavily medicated and assailed by terrifying news from the outside world, Robison had all too many dark threads to weave into the plot that came to consume him.

Politics had also thrown a long shadow across his professional life. The physical sciences were in the grip of another French revolution, led by Antoine Lavoisier. During the 1780s Lavoisier had overthrown the chemistry of the previous century with his discovery of oxygen, from which he had been able to establish new theories of combustion and to begin the process of reducing all material substances to a basic table of elements. Lavoisier's revolution had split British chemistry: some recognised that his technically brilliant experiments had transformed the science of matter, but for others his new and foreign terminology was, like the French metric system and the revolutionary Year Zero, an arrogant

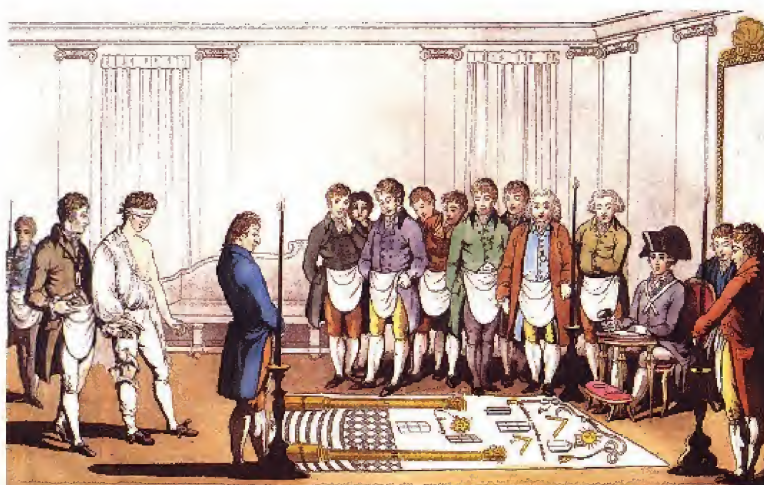


Portrait of John Robison (1798) painted by Henry Raeburn – Source .

attempt to wipe away the accumulated wisdom of the ages and to eliminate the role of God. The old system of chemistry, with its mysterious forms of energy and its languages of essences and principles, had readily contained the idea of a life-force and the mysterious breath of the divine; but in Lavoisier's cold new world, matter was reduced to inert building-blocks manipulated by the measurable forces of pressure and temperature.

Robison had never accepted the French theories, and by 1797 had worked the new chemistry deep into his Illuminist plot. For him, Lavoisier – along with Britain's most famous experimental chemist, the dissenting minister Joseph Priestley – was a master Illuminist, working in concert with infiltrated Masonic lodges to spread the

doctrine of materialism that would underlie the new atheist world order. Madame Lavoisier's famous salons, at which the leading Continental philosophes met, were now revealed by Robison to have been the venues for sacreligious rites where the hostess, dressed in the ceremonial robes of an occult priestess, ritually burned the texts of the old chemistry. Implausible though this image might seem, it was of a piece with other proofs that Robison had assembled in his book – for example, the anonymous German pamphlet that claimed that, at the great philosopher Baron d'Holbach's salons, the brains of living children bought from poor parents were dissected in an attempt to isolate their life-force.



Initiation of an apprentice Freemason around 1800, an engraving (ca. 1805) based on that by Gabanon on the same subject dated 1745 – Source .

The Illuminati had infiltrated Robison's professional life, but his most personal connection with their conspiracy came through freemasonry itself. He had been a member of the Scottish Rite for decades without ever regarding its lodges as more than 'a pretext for passing an hour or two in a fort of decent conviviality, not altogether void of some rational occupation'; but his career had frequently taken him abroad, where he had been shocked to discover that not all masonic orders were so innocent. In

1770 he had spent a year at Catherine's court in St. Petersburg, learning Russian and lecturing on navigation; during the course of his travels he had met with other masons and visited lodges in France, Belgium, Germany and Russia. What he saw had shocked him: by comparison with the Scottish Rite, the Continental lodges were 'schools of irreligion and licentiousness'. Their members seemed to him consumed by 'zeal and fanaticism', their religious views 'much disturbed by the mystical whims of J. Behmen [Jacob Boehme] and Swedenborg – by the fanatical and knavish doctrines of the modern Rosycrucians – by

Magicians – Magnetisers – Exorcists, &c.’ Now, thirty years later, as he recalled the occultism and freethinking to which he had been briefly but unforgettably exposed, he had no doubt as to the source of the destruction that had engulfed the Continent.

Although *Proofs of a Conspiracy* became a handsome bestseller, the Illuminati conspiracy never gripped the imagination of the British political class as it did in mainland Europe. Once the crisis of the French revolution was past, some conservative voices would attribute this to superior British common sense, but in truth Britain at that time had more serious threats and conspiracies to contend with. Tom Paine’s *Rights of Man*, a far more incendiary and radicalising work than any of the Bavarian Illuminati’s ‘secret texts’, had sold over two hundred thousand copies in its cheap sixpenny edition, a number that far exceeded what until that point had been considered the entire book-buying public. With the British fleet convulsed by mutinies and the government struggling to contain mass protests and riots, it was hardly surprising that the doings of a long-disbanded Bavarian lodge seemed less than a pressing concern.



Detail from "Washington As Master Mason", a print showing U.S. President George Washington presiding over a meeting of the Lodge of the Alexandria, Virginia Masonic Lodge, by James Fuller Queen (1870) – Source .

Robison’s book, however, had a profound and enduring impact in the United States of America. Here, the polarised forces of revolution and reaction that had swept Europe were playing out in a form that threatened to split the Founding Fathers and destroy their fledgling Constitution. While the likes of Thomas Jefferson saw themselves as cousins of a French republic that had thrown off the shackles of monarchy and with whom they traded amid British naval blockades, other founders such as Alexander Hamilton, whose Federalist party favoured a powerful state geared towards protecting the interests of its wealthy citizens, feared the infiltration of the radical ideals of the French revolution. In an overheated political milieu where accusations of treason were hurled from both sides, *Proofs of a Conspiracy* was seized on eagerly by the Federalists as evidence of the hidden agenda that lurked behind fine-sounding slogans such as democracy, the abolition of slavery and the rights of man. Robison’s words were repeated endlessly in New England pulpits and pamphlets through 1798 and 1799, and Jefferson

was publicly accused of being a member of Weishaupt’s Order.

But such charges were never substantiated; the ‘Illuminati Scare’ petered out and the Federalists lost power, never to regain it. Yet the episode had touched a nerve deep within the American political mindset, and it has been woven into many subsequent paranoid and panics. Robison’s ideas would continue to be rediscovered and reinvented, and to influence modern politics in curious ways. The doyenne of modern conspiracy theory, Nesta Webster, swallowed his theory whole but then came to believe the Illuminati were a smokescreen: the true conspirators were the ‘Jewish peril’ whose agenda had, she believed, been accurately exposed in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. Although Webster later consigned herself to the margins by joining the British Union of Fascists, her support at the time was more broadly based, and she even won admiring citations in the journalism of Winston Churchill. ‘The

conspiracy against civilization dates from the days of Weishaupt', Churchill wrote for the Sunday Herald in 1920; 'as a modern historian Mrs. Webster has so ably shown, it played a recognisable role in the French revolution'. Many on the isolationist right continue to believe Robison's theory to this day: the official John Birch Society line, for example, remains that Weishaupt's Illuminati 'was the ancestor of the Communist movement and the model for modern subversive conspiratorial movements'.



A version of the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States printed in a 1909 U.S. Government booklet on the Great Seal. According to Henry A. Wallace, this was the version of the Great Seal reverse which caught his eye, causing him to suggest to President Franklin Roosevelt to put the design on a coin, at which point Roosevelt decided to put it on the back of the dollar bill – Source .

After Robison's death following a final medical crisis in 1805 his Edinburgh colleague, the pioneering geologist John Playfair, wrote a respectful memoir that focused on his scientific achievements but was unable to avoid mention of the work for which he was best remembered. 'The alarm excited by the French revolution', Playfair suggested tactfully, 'produced in Mr. Robison a degree of credulity which was not natural to him'. It was a credulity, he stressed, that had been shared by many who were unable to believe that the revolution had been a genuine mass movement reacting to the oppression of a tyrannical regime; they had clung to their belief that it must have been orchestrated by a small cell of fanatics, and that the lack of evidence for any such conspiracy was itself evidence for the conspirators' cunning in concealing their operations from public view.

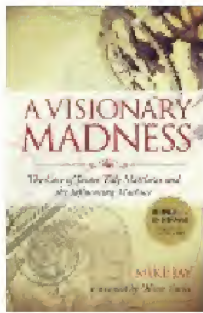
There was much plain sense in Playfair's analysis, and it could equally be applied to many who subsequently came to believe in Robison's theories, and who continue

to believe them today. But if the shock of the modern world erupting into existence before his eyes had unbalanced Robison's judgement, it had also given him a vivid, even visionary perspective on the new dangers that might result from wresting politics away from church and monarchy and placing it in the hands of the people. Forged in the same crucible as every modern political ideology from conservatism to nihilism, anarchy to military dictatorship, the Illuminati conspiracy has become a modern myth: not merely in the dismissive sense that its factual basis evaporates under scrutiny, but as a shapeshifting narrative capable of adapting its meaning to accommodate new and unforeseen scenarios. Since the 1970s, it has been gleefully satirised as a baroque folly of conservative thought by counterculture figures from Robert Anton Wilson onwards, yet this has only increased its fame and mystique: Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons* demonstrates that today's readers will still lap up Robison's unreconstructed version of the story in their millions. In popular culture and old-time religion, satire and nationalist politics, the Illuminati conspiracy still resonates with its warning that the light of reason has its shadows, and even the most enlightened democracy can be manipulated by hidden hands.

Mike Jay has written extensively on scientific and medical history and is a specialist in the study of drugs. His books include *A Visionary Madness: The Case of James Tilly Matthews*

and the Influencing Machine and High Society: Mind-Altering Drugs in History and Culture.

Further Reading

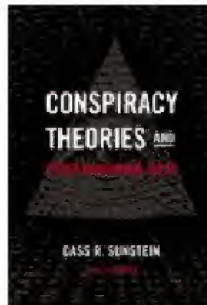


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A Visionary Madness: The Case of James Tilly Matthews and the Influencing Machine (2014, North Atlantic Books)

by Mike Jay, with a foreword from Oliver Sacks.

A snapshot of late eighteenth-century psychiatry, and its relevance to current narratives of madness, conspiracy theories, mind control, and political manipulation.

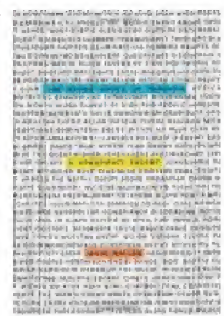


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Conspiracy Theories and Other Dangerous Ideas (2014, Simon & Schuster)

by Cass R. Sunstein.

A collection of essays from America's most-cited legal scholar who for decades has been at the forefront of applied behavioral economics.



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The United States of Paranoia: A Conspiracy Theory Hardcover (2013, Harper)

by Jesse Walker.

A comprehensive history of conspiracy theories in American culture and politics, from the colonial era to the War on Terror.

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Death by Killer Monkeys on the Rise in India

December 5, 2015 Paul Seaburn

<http://mysteriousuniverse.org/2015/12/death-by-killer-monkeys-on-the-rise-in-india/>

If you open your door and catch an unexpected whiff of bananas and fur in the air, slam it shut and cover your head or you may be attacked by murderous brick-throwing monkeys. That's what happened to a priest in India who was killed by a gang of monkeys dropping bricks on his head. What's worse, this is just the latest in a string of monkey murders.



Size doesn't matter as a small monkey chased a larger boy in India

It happened this week in Patna, a city in the state of Bihar in northeast India. Temple priest Munna Mishra was sweeping the path outside his home when monkeys threw bricks and stones at him from a terrace above the path. The priest was taken to a hospital where he died from his injuries.

What kind of monkeys would kill a priest? They're most likely rhesus macaque monkeys which were once wild but have been urbanized by people who feed them bananas, peanuts and other foods on Tuesdays and Saturdays in honor of the Hindu god Hanuman. Unfortunately, urbanization doesn't make the monkeys tame as they're known to steal food, snatch clothing and bite.



A temple honoring the Hindu god Hanuman in Delhi

And kill. Locals report that the priest was the third monkey fatality in the area in recent times and it's not just a problem in Bihar. In 2014, a woman in Shimla in northern India was killed when she tried to chase a gang of monkeys from her farm. In 2007, Delhi deputy mayor SS Bajwa died when he was attacked by a gang of monkeys and fell from his terrace while trying to escape. In 2012, a 14-year-old girl was seriously injured when monkeys attacked her and she fell from a five-story building.



Signs warning against monkey attacks are ineffective

Fighting the killer monkeys is a Planet of the Apes soap opera. Some local governments hire monkey catchers who use trained gray langurs – larger monkeys that are known enemies of rhesus macaques – to scare them away. This doesn't always work – an elderly man was seriously attacked in 2014 by a langur. Towns that can't afford the trainers have resorted to small men in langur costumes as an economical albeit feeble alternative.

This clash of religion, nature and budgets means there's no simple solution to India's murderous monkey mayhem.

Is there any way to escape from these killer simians? Maybe Charlton Heston's approach was the best.

About Mysterious Universe

Mysterious Universe brings you the latest news and podcasts covering the strange, extraordinary, weird, wonderful and everything in between.

Death rituals across cultures and ages

monstrous.com

Pygmies (African Congo)

The Pygmies appear to be sort of uncomfortable with death. When a person dies, they pull down his hut on top of him, and move their camp while relatives cry. Then the dead person is never mentioned again.

Chukchee (Nothern Siberia, Russia)

A three day silent watch was kept to insure the soul then departs. The dead were removed from their huts via special holes cut in the side and then immediately sewn to prevent the spirit from returning and bothering them. The bodies were burned or just taken to a secluded spot.

Maoris (New Zealand)

The Maoris have an elaborate ritual. When people are dying they are placed in huts which are later burned. The corpse is sat up and dressed in nice clothes to be viewed by the public, and the mourners wear wreathes of green leaves, cry out and cut themselves with knives. They chant praises and then have a feast where they give the dead's relatives gifts. After a few years, the bones are cleaned, covered in red earth and put in a special cave.

Solomon Islands

In the Solomon Islands the dead were laid out on a reef for the sharks to eat. At a different point in their history, they stored skulls in fish-shaped containers.

Intuit (Alaska)

Some Inuits covered the corpse with a small igloo. Because of the cold body would remain forever, unless it was eaten by polar bears.

Estonia

Estonians of eastern Europe who follow the old folkways like to throw banquets in their graveyards and eat with the departed. They put a few delicacies on each tombstone to share their food. On certain days when the dead return home for a visit, bathrooms are kept heated and food is laid out in festive array. In this way, bonds are preserved and strengthened between loved ones on both side of life's gate.

Tibet

Tibetan views, in synch with other Bhuddist views in Asia, on death are most cogently expressed in The Tibetan Book of the Dead. Essentially, they feel that death must be confronted to truly achieve spiritual progress. In fact, knowledge of the steps occurring at the time of death is acquired through study, in the hopes that the confrontation will be so directed

toward virtuous thoughts to allow enlightenment, the achievement of Bhudda status rather than continuing the cycle of rebirth. Meditation occurs on the topic of death, event. Relatives present at the time of death attempt not to distract from this confrontation, and a lama may be present to offer advice and read sacred texts, helping the living as well as the dying. Tibetans reportedly even hacked up their dead for bird food because they had no respect for the body.

Jamaica

Although practices have changed, they still involve celebrating nine night, which is a celebration to support the relatives of the dead and provide for the body's safe journey to the next part of life. It is held in a veranda or a bamboo and coconut tent next to a house. Fried fish and, cake and bread sits on a central table and is left until midnight, so that the spirit of the dead can drop by for a snack. The ceremony also involves dancing, extensive singing and 100-proof rum. It ends nine nights after the death, though additional singing must occur 40 nights later, when supposedly the soul has ceased roaming and will no longer pester the living. Journey cakes ("johnnycakes") are also laid with corpses, and often obedah or voodoo ceremonies will occur to help put souls to rest. Previously, sexual images often were present on tombstones, and burial occurred near homes.

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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

The Columbus Journal out of Columbus, Nebraska printed a bizarre story on January 28, 1891 concerning the blasphemous birth of a cloven-hoofed devil-baby to a Minnesota couple.

HAS HOOFS AND HAIR

AN AWFUL MONSTROSITY IN MINNESOTA.

A Woman Who Would 'Rather Have a Devil in Her House' Than of Her Savior-Believed to Be a Judgement on the Mother for Her Blasphemous Remark.

HOWARD LAKE, Minn., Jan. 23-Of all the hideous human malformations ever heard of in the state the 5-weeks-old offspring of Charles and Sarah Miller of McLeod county, is the most atrocious. Accounts of horrible vagaries of nature have from time to time been published, but the awful hoodoo of the village of Plato outdoes all previous horrors. The Millers are a young couple. The husband is a shoemaker, doing a fairly good business, and the Millers had every reason to be well satisfied with the world as they found it until five weeks ago, when Mrs. Miller gave birth to the nondescript creature whose presence has horrified the community and conferred upon the parents an unenviable reputation. The Catholic residents of the village and county are in a ferment of excitement as a result of the statement made by Mrs. Miller anent happenings preceding the birth of the monstrosity. Two months ago, three weeks prior to Mrs. Miller's confinement, a Jewish peddler came to the house selling colored oleographs of the crucifixion. He was told to go about his business, but pressed his wares in such a manner that Mrs. Miller became exasperated and declared that she would **Sooner Have the Devil in Her House** than the portrait of her Savior. The full meaning of the preference she had expressed did not even dawn on the unfortunate woman until she was brought face to face with the frightful creature to which she had given birth. This child-or, as many persons believe, this devil- was born with hair all over its body nearly two inches long. The face and hands are not exempt; they are similarly coated. The features are absolutely fiendish in expression, and the eyes shine like two little heads from beneath a pair of shaggy brows. It has a tail eighteen inches long. This enfant terrible was provide at its birth with a full set of teeth. Two short, sharp horns protrude from the skull, and the claw-like hands are furnished with claws like those of an eagle. The feet are exactly like the hoofs of a goat, and the hair covering the body is as coarse as goat's hair, and similar in appearance. The creature could crawl from its birth, and, refusing the natural sustenance of a normal child of like age, it left its mother's side, sliding on its hands and knees all over the house, devouring any scraps to be found. This child devil is now five weeks old, and has already shown itself as a ferocious beast. It snaps savagely at the restraining hand, and the facial expression produced by an effort to curb the tendencies of the creature is inexpressibly frightful.

Anxious to See the Freak.

The mother is almost an imbecile as a result of her horrible experience, and the father acts as though crazed. Physicians are pouring into the village in dozens and people from surrounding counties are arriving constantly, all anxious to see the freak. The authorities threaten to arrest and heavily fine any person known to spread the report; the condition of the mother mentally and physically being extremely precarious indeed. A girl working in the house whose name is withheld by request, yesterday encountered the 5-weeks-old fiend on its way down stairs. She endeavored to carry it back to the room from which it had escaped, when the creature attacked her so fiercely that she was compelled to knock it down with a pitcher she was carrying. It is impossible that the efforts at concealment can prove successful, as the facts have been communicated by local physicians to the co-workers in the cities, and every train brings new additions to the crowd already at Plato. The Catholic religion is predominant there, and the members of that church are firm in the belief that the freak has been sent as a judgement on the mother for her unholy sentiment."

ANOTHER MUSEUM ATTRACTION.
A Woman Orders Baby Agred From Her Door.—The Story of a Monstrous Birth.

A report from Chatham, Minn., states that Mrs. Sarah A. Morris, a respectable lady of that place, 19-1/2 yrs. Weighs 140 lbs., has given birth, so the most remarkable monster ever born of in this part of Minnesota. The people who have visited the house call it the devil. The mother, when she saw it, went into hysterics, and has been sent to the asylum at St. Peter in a hopeless state of lunacy.

The devil was born from twelve eggs, and has developed so rapidly that it weighs twenty-five pounds. Its display of intelligence is something very fearful, and exceeds that of ordinary children from 12 to 18 months old. Its body is covered thickly with white hair about two inches long. It has two horns, a tail like that of a cat, and feet which are partly like those of a man and partly like those of a dog.

The birth of the phenomenon is due, according to members of the Morris family, to a slight occurrence. Some time in November, when a local agent appeared at the house selling Catholic Bibles, Mrs. Morris formed a violent dislike to the man, and ordered him out of the house, telling him she would no more have the devil in the house as a Bible. The agent returned her of blasphemy and, and eventually she trusted him out the door. "I will send you the devil to plague you."

The story of the demon-tot made the rounds through a variety of national newspapers with similar details, although in some versions the last name was printed as "Morris" instead of "Miller." An article in the *Perrysburg Journal* claimed that the mother had to be institutionalized after the sight of the baby sent her into lunacy.

Within a week or two, so THE DISPATCH correspondent was informed by an official of the Smithsonian Institution to-day, not less than 2,000 people have requested to see the "devil baby," and the gentlemen of the Institution have just discovered what it all means. A short time since a country paper in Minnesota published a story that a young priest attempted to sell pictures of the Madonna and child to a virago, who said that she would be the devil's baby if he had had one.

Born With Horns and Tail.

The woman was "enranted at the time, and when a child was born it had horns, sloven feet and a forked tail. It lived but a short time, and, as the story went, was secured by a scientific gentleman and forwarded to the Smithsonian. The republication of this absurd story in various places has sent thousands of visitors to see the human nature, and the authorities of the institution have been subjected to almost unbearable annoyance.

In April of the same year the Pittsburg Dispatch ran a blurb that suggested the story of the Minnesota enfant terrible had been a hoax. Rumors swirled that after the child died, its body was taken to the Smithsonian. Thousands of museum visitors inquired about the "devil baby," but the staff had no idea what they were talking about.

I haven't been able to find a birth or death record for a Morris or Miller baby born in 1890-1891 to parents matching those names in Minnesota, but that doesn't mean that such a child never existed. Fabrication or not, it made for one *Hell* of a story.

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Did our ancient ancestors 'kill the cat'? - BBC News

bbc.com

Did our ancient ancestors 'kill the cat'?

By Helen Briggs BBC News

♦ 2 December 2015



The European sabre-toothed cat was about the size of a modern tiger or lion

Image copyrightSPL

Our ancient human cousins may have fought off big cats with spears, according to archaeological evidence.

The sabre-toothed cat lived alongside early humans, and may have been a fearsome enemy, say scientists.

Several feline teeth - and a chunk of arm bone - were uncovered at a site in Germany known for the oldest discovery of human spears.

The 300,000-year-old animal fossils are described as "spectacular".

Several types of sabre-toothed cat - once known as the sabre-toothed tiger - lived for over 40 million years, before becoming extinct about 12,000 years ago.

If it could have been demonstrated that hominins killed the cat then that would have been very interesting

Dr Mark Roberts, Institute of Archaeology, UCL

The predator had enormous teeth, which it used to rip through flesh.

Dr Jordi Serangeli, of the University of Tübingen, Germany, said the remains proved for the first time that the sabre-toothed cat was living in Europe alongside early humans.

"We can say that the humans - and the sabre-toothed cat - were living 300,000 years ago in the same area, in the same landscape," he told BBC News.

"The humans were hunters but they were not alone; they had to defend themselves from all the big carnivores."

Human hunters

Homo Heidelbergensis was among the first type of early human to use wooden spears.

Scatterings of animal bones found in their camps suggest they used the spears to hunt animals like the horse and deer.

The latest find of five teeth and a bone from two individual sabre-toothed cats at a former coal mine in Schöningen near Hanover gives a new insight into the perils faced by early humans.

"The discovery illustrates the possible day-to-day challenges that the Schöningen hominins would have faced and suggests that the wooden spears were not necessarily only used for hunting, but possibly also as a weapon for self-defence," Dr Serangeli, and colleagues at the University of Leiden, report in the *Journal of Human Evolution*.

The cat's humerus bone - worked by humans into a rudimentary hammer- is the first example of its kind anywhere in the world, he added.

'Killed the cat'

Dr Mark Roberts of UCL, London, is an archaeologist at the Boxgrove site in southern England, which was home to one of Britain's oldest known human occupants, *Homo heidelbergensis*, 500,000 years ago.

Image caption



Teeth from sabre-toothed cat, *Homotherium latidens*

Image copyright MINKUSIMAGES

Image caption

Evidence shows "hominins (humans and their ancestors) were already the top predator at this time; they were able to kill and butcher, without interruption and competition, large animals such as rhino, bison, horse and giant deer", he said.

But it is uncertain if humans around at the time used weapons to kill the sabre-toothed cat, he added.

"If it could have been demonstrated that hominins killed the cat then that would have been very interesting but without more skeletal material that is impossible to demonstrate."

The Schöningen excavation is a cooperation between the University of Tübingen and the State Service for Cultural Heritage of Lower Saxony.

Follow Helen on Twitter.

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• 24 November 2015



An escaped cow chases Sgt Bill Smith at Wheal Dream, Helston in 1980

A photo, film and audio archive documenting Cornish life has been made available online.

The collection of more than 30,000 items, some dating back to 1850, have been donated by professional and amateur photographers.

The project, called Cornish Memory, received £225,000 from the Heritage Lottery

Fund which was used to create the website and digitise the media.

Organisers plan to add thousands more images over the coming months.



A photograph of Fore Street in St Day in 1900

Image copyright Paddy Bradle

Image caption

Image caption

Manager Claire White said the project "relied heavily" on volunteers and the idea came from the fact that numerous collections were not accessible to the public.

She said: "We wanted to bring the various collections

together to make it available.

"We started work on the project in 2012 and still have thousands to add."

Ms White said she was in conversation with the Heritage Lottery Fund for further grants and was searching for alternative funding to help pay for the project in the future.

Image copyright National Maritime

Museum Cornwall

Image caption

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People in Falmouth inspecting a shark's teeth in the 1960s



Boscawen Street in Truro in the 1890s

Image copyright National Maritime Museum Cornwall

DJ in trouble after playing Peppa Pig theme as police walked in metro.co.uk

Jen Mills for Metro.co.uk Thursday 10 Dec 2015 3:45 pm



snort (Picture: Getty/Myles Goode)

A DJ found himself in hot water after playing the Peppa Pig theme tune as police walked into his club night.

Officers also had to deal with the disc jockey snorting when he noticed them, it was reported.

DJ in trouble after playing Peppa Pig theme as police walked in

Now the council has told Cooney's Bar owners Joanne and Michael Cooney to behave or risk losing their licence.

Things escalated when North Wales Police reported the pub in Llandudno for the prank, and asked for opening hours to be restricted, WalesOnline reported.



Police didn't find the Peppa reference funny (file photo) Picture: Getty

MORE: 'Holy sh*t': Women reveal the first thing they said after giving birth

At a hearing on Wednesday, Joanne said the DJ in question has three children and a wife but sometimes had a drink while working at the pub.

Since she told him this had to stop he has been on his 'best behaviour', she added.

DJ in trouble after playing Peppa Pig theme as police walked in

How does the song go?

Peppppppa Pig

snort

Peppppppa Pig

snort* *snort

Peppppppa Pig

long snort

After the hearing, Joanne told the paper: 'We want to draw a line under it and get on and have a good relationship with the police.'

'I am sorry for everything but we are relieved and want to move on.'

Force licensing officer Aaron Haggas told the panel that problems dated back to April last year and said one officer wasn't happy going to the bar alone.

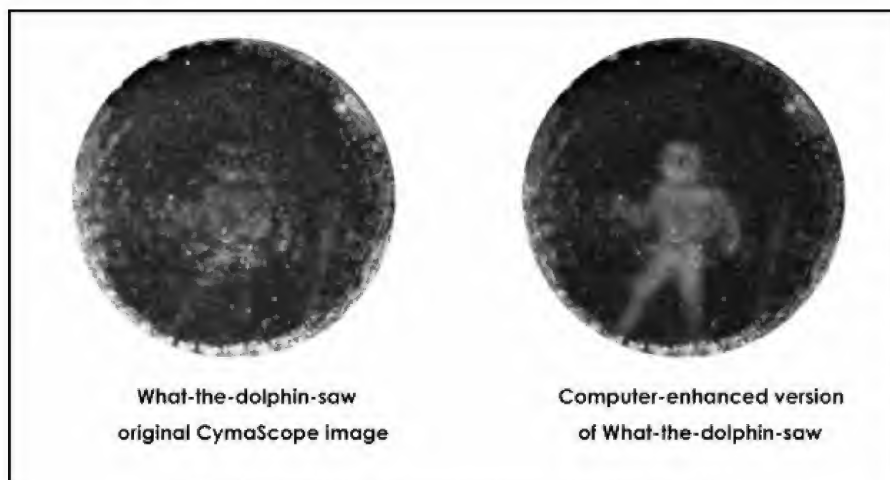
'If an officer is not happy to visit then how do members of the public feel?' the paper reported he told the hearing.

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There's something fishy about that viral image of what dolphins 'see'

By Rachel Feltman
December 9

washingtonpost.com



It just doesn't squeak right with me. (SpeakDolphin)

You may have seen the image above because, well, it has been everywhere. And it seems really cool: The folks behind it claim that it shows what a dolphin sees, using echolocation, when a human diver is standing in front of it. Dolphins are wicked smart, but the extent of

that intelligence remains largely mysterious. Do dolphins have feelings the way humans do? Could they be trained to communicate with us — or even to speak with us?

In a way, dolphins seem almost like an intelligent alien race that has been living with us for thousands of years, unable to break the communication barrier to say hello. I realize this is the plot of "The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy," but hey, art imitates life.

But the press release circulating with the image didn't really hold water. Who were these researchers, and where were they from? And why wasn't there any discussion of the potential nuances of "sight" in the brain? Here's what I mean by that: It's not really the eyes (or the ears) that "see." Our experience of sight is fabricated by the brain. It's a trippy thought, but the long and short of it in this context is that we can't really say "this is what a dolphin sees" because we don't know how their brains turn sensory information into a perception of reality. It wouldn't be totally insane for someone to make an amalgamation of a dolphin-ear vision, but I was surprised there weren't more caveats in the release. (Hat tip to Kyle Hill from Nerdist for starting a conversation about this on Twitter)

Diving deeper (like a whole two clicks away from the press release — hard-hitting reporting, to be sure) I realized that the organization behind the findings — SpeakDolphin — poses more questions than answers.

Founder (and head researcher) Jack Kassewitz has this on his website, which is a little troubling:

Kassewitz doesn't have any advanced degrees in marine biology or animal behavior. That's totally okay. I'm not college-shaming. It seems as though Kassewitz has been doing research

The Bias of Science

One of the strangest and most disheartening encounters I have been exposed to in this quest for "Dolphin Communication" has been the down right bigoted and biased agenda of scientists and the academic community of dolphin institutions. When reason and truth seem more like a political agenda than the impassionate search for the facts through scientific investigation....the sciences fall into a pit of intellectual corruption stemming from kingdoms and oligarchies of higher institutions and dolphin facilities seeking conservative money grabbing grants and customer monopolies. The search for scientific truths lives in all of us as a basic freedom to add our personal scientific piece to the puzzles of the universe. How many great discoveries or scientists have been laughed at by the science communities and called "quacks" only to be shown as exposing the truth. I am proud of my journey to try to have a conversation with another sentient inhabitant of this planet. Scientific racism or species dominance illustrates how little we have learned and how far we have to go.

Jack Kasewitz
President of Global Heart, Inc.
www.SpeakDolphin.com

(via Kasewitz.com)

for years, and because science is a method — not a body of facts — it really is possible to do good research without having sat through a bunch of lectures. The red flag is that Kasewitz doesn't seem to publish his work or loop in more qualified scientists.

Business Insider (which beat me to the punch,

tweeting out a story on this just as I was writing my first paragraphs) spoke to Justin Gregg, senior research associate and vice president of the Dolphin Communication Project, about the technology that Kasewitz uses for these projects. The images rely on something called a CymaScope — and no one really knows what the heck it is. The last time SpeakDolphin released images made with CymaScope, Gregg and other researchers reached out for more information and got nada.

So what we have here is a thing that could totally be real. But it and the work leading up to it have never been published in a scientific journal. That's really not okay, because the publication process is how scientific information gets vetted. For a paper to be published in a peer-reviewed journal, other scientists must sign off on it. And when something is in a scientific journal, other scientists can continue to evaluate the methods used and the conclusions drawn. If things seem amiss, they can take action. There was a great example of this a couple of weeks ago, when scientists publicly clashed over findings on tardigrade DNA. Without publication of methods — peer reviewed or otherwise — scientists won't be able to comment on the findings.

And if all you have is one researcher claiming something is so, what you have just isn't good science.

In an interview with The Post, Kasewitz told me that he has an internal research team that reviews everything — but that the apparent inaccessibility of his data is no mistake.

"I happen to believe in open source publishing," Kasewitz said. In most cases, open source publishing means sending your paper in for review at a journal that shares its studies online for free — or even just publishing a pre-print of a paper before it's been reviewed for publication. Kasewitz says his review process is internal, and that all his work is readily available in his e-book.

"I know that this discovery is p--sing off and shaking off a lot of people. I'm not going to hide it," Kasewitz said. "People will say this can't be. My response to that is, well, are you a physicist? Can you show me the math that shows it can't be?"

It's worth noting that this is exactly what's supposed to happen during peer review.

Kassewitz points out that his findings all come from "common people" — which is pretty cool. One could call his publishing methods charmingly quirky. But the problem is that opting out of the system keeps other scientists from evaluating your work at all — let alone taking it seriously.

Kelly Jaakkola, director of research at the Dolphin Research Center, said as much to The Post in an email.

"This information is just from a press release, which anyone can put out without external checks," Jaakkola wrote. "This hasn't been published in a scientific journal or even presented at a scientific conference. Science has peer review for a reason. So unless/until it's been vetted by other scientists, there's no scientific "result" to talk about."

This post has been updated

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Twitcher shocked by rare eagle owl he was looking out for as it landed on the back of his head

Just in time for pantomime season - "It's behind you!"



This season's hottest head accessory This season's hottest head accessory Photo: Chris Meewis/Mercury Press Photo: Chris Meewis/Mercury Press

A twitcher - that's a bird-watcher to me and you - was looking out for a magnificent and rare eagle-owl in the Netherlands when he got a massive shock.

"When I got home to show my family and friends, everyone laughed so much at the picture, some people thought I had messed with the picture in Photoshop but it was real"

Chris Meewis

The bird he was looking out for came really close to him!

Too close, in fact - it landed on the back of his head, as a colleague captured the moment on camera.

The wildlife photographers travelled to the town of Hilversum in the Netherlands after hearing that a large Eurasian eagle-owl, usually only spotted in remote forests, had been seen on the roof of a house near some playing fields.



Look at the wingspan on that bird

One photographer was so busy looking through his camera lense that he didn't notice the bird was making a beeline for his head.

Chris Meewis, who took the photo, told the Daily Mail: "We were all there waiting to see if we could spot this owl and photographers had come from all over to see it as it is a really magnificent bird.

"It was supposed to be living on the roof of this house near some playing fields and everyone had set up their cameras but were yet to spot it. Suddenly out of nowhere this huge shape appeared and landed on one of the photographer's heads.

"It was so funny as all of the cameras suddenly turned on him. There he was thinking he was the one taking the picture and suddenly he finds himself the centre of one! Everyone was laughing but he was in complete shock and just stood there very still."

The owl stayed on the man's head for 10-15 seconds before swooping off.

Luckily, the unnamed man was not hurt, he just had a few light scratches.

This is surprising, as the owl has very long talons that could cause a lot of damage.

Mr. Meewis didn't bring his professional camera with him - just his small digital one, so was happy to have snapped such good shots.

He told the Mail: "I was really chuffed that I got the best picture of the owl on his head. There were all these photographers there with their huge cameras and big lens and then I managed to get the best picture with my little compact camera - I was quite surprised.

"When I got home to show my family and friends, everyone laughed so much at the picture, some people thought I had messed with the picture in Photoshop but it was real.

"It was just a shame that I only got one picture of the moment, but the bird appeared so quickly and was gone so quickly that no one really had time, so I should consider myself lucky."

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'Floating man stunt' causes traffic chaos as man hangs on to side of bus

16:07, 10 Dec 2015 Updated 16:11, 10 Dec 2015 By Kara O'Neill

mirror.co.uk



Move over Dynamo, Chinese company attempt magician's London bus stunt, but get fined for causing traffic chaos

An ad company trying to recreate Dynamo's London bus stunt has been fined after a 'floating man gimmick' caused a commotion during rush-hour.

The promotional stunt, not the first of its kind in recent weeks, is said to have disrupted the orderly flow of traffic in China, leading authorities to put their foot down over the dangerous advertising method.

While police in Yangzhou, a city in East China's Jiangsu Province, named neither the company nor the product which was being promoted, they told mainstream media that the now infamous "magic bus" had been seized and its driver's licence revoked.

Authorities decided to take action after several reports of a "floating man" surfaced during rush-hour.

Citizens appeared to be stunned by the stunt which shows a man keeping his entire body suspended in mid-air with one arm leaning on the side of a bus window.

Traffic cameras also picked up the magic bus at several major intersections being led by a sedan, with a photographer inside snapping pictures.



Chinese authorities have fined an advertising company for a "floating man" stunt

Bad PR: Authorities have fined an advertising company for a 'floating man' stunt which caused a commotion during rush hour traffic

The advertising method has been seen at least twice before in recent weeks, shocking motorists in different cities.

Both attempts were met with

which caused commotion during rush hour traffic

said the stunt was both dangerous and disruptive.

criticism from authorities, who



Chinese authorities have fined an advertising company for a "floating man" stunt which caused commotion during rush hour traffic

Road chaos: The promotional stunt is said to have disrupted the orderly flow of traffic

This week's "floating man" is also said to have hit the branches of a tall tree while out on the road.

The spate of floating person stunts originated in mid-October with a "floating wedding" involving a woman sitting on nothing outside the window of a double-decker

bus and a man who was seemingly hovering in mid-air.

The pair involved in the wedding-like scene were performance artists in the city of Zhengzhou, capital of central China's Henan province, who wanted to send a message to citizens about love.



Chinese authorities have fined an advertising company for a "floating man" stunt which caused commotion during rush hour traffic

Magic stunt: But it met with criticism from authorities, who called it dangerous and disruptive

The woman, dressed in a wedding gown, sat on the outside of the bus, and was being "pursued" mid-air by the man who was standing on nothing, his entire body seemingly held in place only by his hand, which was resting on the bus window.

DailyMirror

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NEW YORK, N. Y., July 8.—Martin Thorn, the man who, with Mrs. Augusta Nack, is accused of murdering William Guldensuppe, the bathhouse rubber, and cutting up his body, was kept on the rack by the police most of the day. He did not confess that he was a murderer, but he made some statements which the officials decline to give out at present, and they say they do not care whether he confesses or not. They claim the evidence they have is sufficient to convict him, and Mrs. Nack at least as an accessory. A significant feature of Thorn's statement is that relating to his whereabouts on the day the murder is supposed to have been committed. Of that day he says:

"Friday morning, June 25, I got out of bed about 9 o'clock and went to Eleventh avenue and Thirty-fourth street, to the same saloon where I had been the day before. It must have been about 10 or 11 o'clock when I reached the saloon. I played pinochle with Barber Carl and others. I refuse to say anything further about that day except that I went to Maloney's about 10 o'clock at night and went to bed at 10:45 the same night."

The important point in this statement

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Edward Mordake—A Mystery Solved

In which I argue that the two-faced man Edward Mordake was really the literary creation of the 19th-century poet Charles Lotin Hildreth.



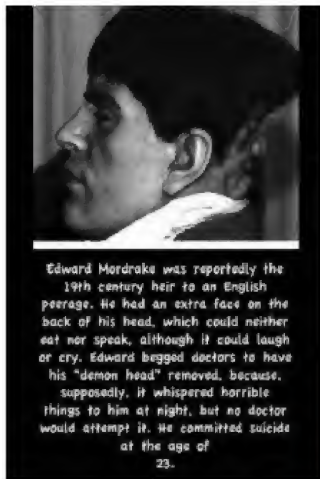
Edward
Mordake

The Boston Sunday Post - Dec 8, 1895

(sometimes spelled Mordrake) was, so the story goes, heir to an English peerage, but this inheritance brought him no comfort because he was cursed with a terrible deformity — a second face on the back of his head. This "devil twin" possessed a kind of hateful intelligence. It never slept but instead whispered constantly of "such things as they only speak of in hell." Driven mad by this demon companion, Mordake committed suicide at the age of 23, leaving behind instructions that the demon face should be destroyed before his burial, "lest it continues its dreadful whisperings in my grave."

Many people are introduced to the story of Mordake by a photograph said to be of him that has circulated online for many years. This photo is often accompanied by a caption that briefly summarizes his unfortunate life.

However, this isn't a photograph of the actual Mordake. Instead, it's a photo of a wax replica created by an artist to show what Mordake might have looked like. Where this wax figure was



The Boston Sunday Post - Dec 8, 1895

displayed, or by whom it was created, I'm not sure, but various replicas of Mordake have been created over the years for wax museums around the world.



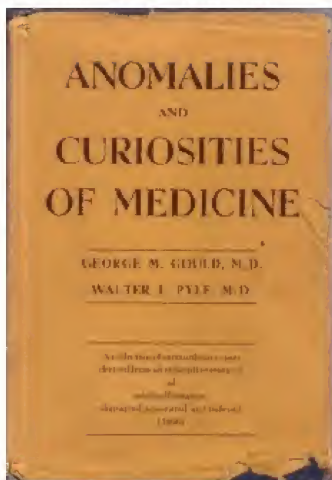
The Boston Sunday Post - Dec 8, 1895

Mordake has popped up in other places in

contemporary popular culture. He's the subject of a song by Tom Waits, "Chained Together For Life." There's also an opera about him — *Mordake* by Erling Wold. Recently he was featured as a character in several episodes of the TV series *American Horror Story: Freak Show*. And a movie about him is reported to be in development.

So the story of Mordake has certainly appealed to the popular imagination. But one question remains unanswered. Was Mordake a real person?

In Search of Mordake



The Boston Sunday Post - Dec 8, 1895

The search for information about Mordake led researchers to an old book, *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine*, published in October 1896. It was authored by two American doctors, George M. Gould and Walter L. Pyle, who collected together all kinds of bizarre medical cases, including the story of Mordake, which they presented as follows:

One of the weirdest as well as most melancholy stories of human deformity is that of Edward Mordake, said to have been heir to one of the noblest peerages in England. He never claimed the title, however, and committed suicide in his twenty-third year. He lived in complete seclusion, refusing the visits even of the members of his own family. He was a young man of fine attainments, a profound scholar, and a musician of rare ability. His figure was remarkable for

its grace, and his face – that is to say, his natural face – was that of an Antinous. But upon the back of his head was another face, that of a beautiful girl, "lovely as a dream, hideous as a devil". The female face was a mere mask, "occupying only a small portion of the posterior part of the skull, yet exhibiting every sign of intelligence, of a malignant sort, however". It would be seen to smile and sneer while Mordake was weeping. The eyes would follow the

movements of the spectator, and the lips "would gibber without ceasing". No voice was audible, but Mordake avers that he was kept from his rest at night by the hateful whispers of his "devil twin", as he called it, "which never sleeps, but talks to me forever of such things as they only speak of in Hell. No imagination can conceive the dreadful temptations it sets before me. For some unforgiven wickedness of my forefathers I am knit to this fiend – for a fiend it surely is. I beg and beseech you to crush it out of human semblance, even if I die for it." Such were the words of the hapless Mordake to Manvers and Treadwell, his physicians. In spite of careful watching, he managed to procure poison, whereof he died, leaving a letter requesting that the "demon face" might be destroyed before his burial, "lest it continues its dreadful whisperings in my grave." At his own request, he was interred in a waste place, without stone or legend to mark his grave.

Unfortunately, here the trail for clues about Mordake ran cold, because Gould and Pyle didn't reveal where they found the story. They said only that it was "taken from lay sources." And no earlier references to Mordake were known.

Nevertheless, the fact that this earliest known version of Mordake's story was in a medical text (rather than, say, a collection of short stories) added an air of authenticity to the narrative. Because although Gould and Pyle seemed willing to include in their book almost any story, no matter how questionable, their work was still non-fiction. Presumably, they didn't invent the story of Mordake. They heard about it somewhere.

Questions and Doubts

Attempts to judge the authenticity of the Mordake story by evidence internal to the tale itself proved inconclusive.

From a medical perspective, the case of Mordake could possibly be true. Or rather, not impossible. It would demonstrate the phenomenon of *craniopagus parasiticus*, which, as wikipedia puts it, happens when "a parasitic twin head with an undeveloped body is attached to the head of a developed twin." Or it could be a case of *Diprosopus* (also known as craniofacial duplication), which is the result of abnormal protein activity, not twinning. Either way, it's an extremely rare phenomenon, and those affected by such conditions typically don't live long past childbirth. In 2008, for instance, a young girl with two faces was born in India and survived for only six weeks.

However, while Mordake's case may not be impossible, it does include scientifically questionable details. Cases of *craniopagus parasiticus*, for instance, always involve monozygotic (or identical) twins, which means that the two twins are always of the same sex. Therefore, Mordake could not have had the face of a woman on the back of his head, as the story repeated by Gould and Pyle specifies. But defenders of the story could argue that this detail might be an embellishment added to the tale over the years. After all, how could anyone really determine the gender of the extra face anyway?

More serious reservations are raised by the story's general lack of sources and corroboratory details. As early as 1905, we find a report in *The Theosophical Review* (December 1905)

which notes that the two doctors who attended Mordake, "Manvers and Treadwell," could not be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Nor do their names pop up anywhere else, outside of discussions of the Mordake case.

In 1958, the folklorist Paul Brewster queried the readers of the *Journal of the History of Medicine* for information about Mordake, noting that, "If this is a genuine case in teratology, there should be authoritative sources for it." His plea went unanswered.

But these doubts and questions weren't enough to conclusively disprove the story, and popular belief in his existence was bolstered by writers in the "strange but true" genre who presented his tale to readers as fact. For instance, it was described as fact in Frank Edwards's *Strange People* (1961) as well as in the 1977 edition of *The Book of Lists*

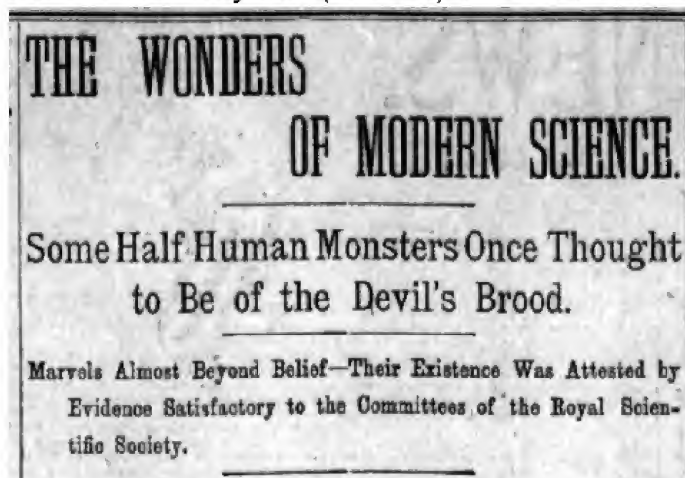
...

The Lay Source

...

However, I have new information that may solve the riddle of Mordake's identity, because I believe I've found the "lay source" that Gould and Pyle relied upon.

I did a keyword search of the archive of 19th-century American papers at newspapers.com (which requires a subscription) and discovered that Mordake's story appeared in an article written by the poet Charles Lotin Hildreth that ran in American papers in 1895, approximately a year before the publication of Gould and Pyle's book. It ran first in the *Boston Sunday Post* on Dec. 8, 1895, and a few days later was published in a variety of other papers, including the *Parsons Daily Sun* (Dec. 11) and *The Decatur Herald* (Dec. 14).



The Boston Sunday Post - Dec 8, 1895

The article, titled "The Wonders of Modern Science: some half human monsters once thought to be of the Devil's brood," describes a variety of remarkable "human freaks" whose cases Hildreth claims to have found in old reports of the "Royal Scientific Society" (the "musty old pages" of which, he tells us, are characterized by their "long S's and their turgid phraseology").

Among the cases Hildreth details are the "Fish Woman of Lincoln" — a young girl whose legs, from the hips downward were "covered with shining scales and terminated in the most exact tails of fish." There's a "half human, half crab" whose hands and feet end in enormous, hard-shelled claws. The "melon child of Radnor," we learn, had a head the size and color of a melon, with no perceptible organs of sense except a vertical slit for a mouth. Mr. Pewness of Stratton had feet where his hands should be, "and vice versa." The "four-eyed man of Cricklade" had two sets of eyes, one above the other. "Jackass Johnny" was cursed with "a pair of enormously long, furry ears,

exactly like those of an ass." The "Norfolk spider" was a monstrous thing that crawled upon its belly with six hairy jointed legs with claws and a human head.

Illustrations that accompanied the article helped readers to visualize all these unfortunate beings.



Finally the list ends with the "weirdest as well as most melancholy" story of Edward Mordake. This passage has to be Gould and Pyle's "lay source" since it is word-for-word the same as what later appears in *Anomalies*.

Non-Fiction or Fiction?

The Boston Sunday Post - Dec 8, 1895



The Boston Sunday Post - Dec 8, 1895

Hildreth's article reads like non-fiction, and it's certainly presented to readers as such. Gould and Pyle evidently thought it was a true account of old medical cases. Not only did they lift Mordake's story from it, they also took the

account of the four-eyed man of Cricklade and repeated that verbatim in their book (again, without giving Hildreth any credit).

But the more closely we examine Hildreth's article, the fishier it becomes. First of all, what is this "Royal Scientific Society" that he claims was his source? Did he mean the Royal Society of London? Perhaps he did, or perhaps he came up with a suitably impressive sounding but actually non-existent society.

And if he did mean the Royal Society of London, then it should be possible to track down earlier references to the cases he describes. After all, the early transactions of the Royal Society have all been scanned and are searchable online.

But no. These characters such as the Fish Woman of Lincoln and the Norfolk Spider are

One of the weirdest as well as most melancholy stories of human deformity is that of Edward Mordake, said to have been heir to one of the noblest peerages in England. He never claimed the title, however, and committed suicide in his twenty-third year. He lived in complete seclusion, refusing the visits even of the members of his own family. He was a young man of fine attainments, a profound scholar, and a musician of rare ability. His figure was remarkable for its grace, and his face—that is to say, his natural face—was that of an Antinous. But upon the back of his head was another face, that of a beautiful girl, "lovely as a dream, hideous as a devil."

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CHARLES LOTIN HILDRETH

The Boston Sunday Post - Dec 8, 1895

mentioned nowhere before surfacing in Hildreth's article. And when we realize this, that's when it becomes apparent that Hildreth's article was fiction. All of it sprang from his imagination, including Edward Mordake.

This makes sense because Hildreth was not only a poet, but also a writer of speculative fiction. He authored a children's novel *The Mysterious City of*

Oo, about a young boy's journey into the Australian outback where he discovers that "a white civilization of ancient Greek origins flourishes among the savages" (description from *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*). His short stories frequently ran in papers, and many of them are what we would describe today as science fiction. Even his poetry (which is very much in the tradition of Edgar Allan Poe) displays a preoccupation with gothic, other-worldly themes. So a fictional piece about "half human monsters" is something that Hildreth not only could have written, but also would have written.

It also makes sense that newspapers would have presented his story as non-fiction, because 19th-century newspapers did this frequently. It was only in the 20th Century that magazines catering specifically to speculative fiction were created and provided an outlet for writers in this genre. Before then, authors relied upon newspapers to publish their stories, and it was common to add excitement to the tales by presenting them as fact.

This tradition goes back to Poe, who published six of his tales initially in the guise of non-fiction, and the practice continued throughout the century. One of the more famous examples is the case of the Man-Eating Tree of Madagascar. In 1874, the *New York World* ran an article about this bizarre tree that ate human flesh. The piece was entirely fiction, but readers didn't know that, and for decades afterwards copies of the article continued to circulate as fact. Several explorers even went in search of the tree.

So we should add Edward Mordake to the list of 19th Century newspaper hoaxes that continued to fool people for decades (or in this case, over a century) after their publication.

In other words, Mordake never existed. He was the literary creation of Charles Lotin Hildreth.

Unfortunately, Hildreth didn't live to see the success of his creation. He died in August 1896, at the age of 39, before the publication of Gould and Pyle's *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine*. But he doubtless would have been proud that his character has captured the imagination of so many people.

Health/Medicine Journalism

Posted on *Fri Apr 24, 2015*

Comments

Thank you for this. I've been trying to get people to understand that Edward Mordrake was fiction ever since that episode of American Horror Story came out, only to have them reply "Nuh-UH, Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine says so!" no matter how much I pick that account apart. Maybe this new information will finally convince them.

Posted by Dominic on Sat Apr 25, 2015 at 01:17 AM

Nice work, man.

Also, I didn't know the museum was an actual, physical museum.

Posted by zequi in buenos aires on Sat Apr 25, 2015 at 10:49 AM

How did the newspaper article connect to Charles Lotin Hildreth? Did it have a distinct byline?

Posted by Garth Haslam in Penngrove, California, USA on Fri May 15, 2015 at 04:49 PM

Garth -- Yes, the article did have a distinct byline. I provide a link to a scan of the complete article in my article above. It's the second link in the section "The Lay Source."

Posted by The Curator in San Diego on Tue May 19, 2015 at 09:15 AM

Cool! I would like to add a summary of your article with link back to this page to my Anomalies website at <http://www.anomalyinfo.com>; would that be okay? I usually research stories like this myself, but I love finding other people that do it too and try to give credit where its due.

Posted by Garth Haslam in Penngrove, California, USA on Thu May 28, 2015 at 12:30 PM

I consider fascinating this story but at the same time I didnt believed it could be true. No face with capacity to speak, to whisper, could share the same brain. Certainly it was a fiction, independently of you find the source of the news. Nevertheless, congratulations for accuracy work searching! (sorry about my errors; I dont know English! I hope this line make sense).

Posted by Luciano de Almeida Peruci in Sao Pedro - Brasil on Sat Oct 03, 2015 at 07:20 AM

The shown wax replica is from the Panoptikum (wax museum) in Hamburg, Germany.

Posted by DonZottel in Berlin, Germany on Tue Oct 13, 2015 at 08:37 AM

Commenting is no longer available in this channel entry.

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These 2 eerie dolls are walking around London taunting commuters

konbini.com

Why Two Eerie Dolls Are Walking Around London Taunting Commuters

by Matthew Kirby

If you're anywhere near central London over the next week you may notice two life-sized Victorian dolls wandering around freaking out commuters – and probably petrifying the elderly.

The two 10-year-old sisters have been spotted causing a scene in various locations across the capital, including Charing Cross Tube Station, Oxford Street, Regent's Street and Hamleys.



(Photograph: Tim Anderson / Taylor Herring)

They've been pushing around an empty antique pram and playing with an assortment of toys dressed in period costumes reminiscent of The Grady sisters from **Stephen King's** *The Shining*.

Commuters have already taken to Twitter to tell of their harrowing experience. One person said: "Creepy dolls spotted at Oxford circus tube. And they move. My nightmares have become a reality".

The chilling figures form part of a week-long marketing ploy by illusionist **Derren Brown** for his forthcoming, psychological attraction at Thorpe Park.

Tailors spent three weeks creating the white Victorian outfits; accompanied by deadpan doll masks which hide the identity of the two young sisters.

Derren said: "The theme of Victoriana is ever present in my work. [The dolls] are just a taster of what my new attraction has in store for visitors to Thorpe Park next Spring."

Thorpe Park gave hints towards the arrival of the attraction back in October, and in an effort to end speculation about the 'ride' some enthusiasts tried hacking the resorts social media account to uncover more details. Derren said:

"I believe we are moving toward a future where theme park attractions not only give you a physical experience but also play with your mind and the concept of what is real."

The company have revealed that the attraction will encompass 2,306 square metres, involve

a team of over 1,000 specialists from – what Thorpe Park say is – their 'Magic Making Creative Department' and external experts for the 13-minute unique journey.



Matthew Kirby

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*Mike Vallis, Divisional Director of Thorpe Park Resort, said:
"Due to demand and interest in our largest investment to date
we have released our next clue, The Victorian Twins"
(Photograph: Matt Alexander /PA Wire)*



(Photograph: Matt Alexander /PA Wire)



(Photograph: Matt Alexander /PA Wire)



(Photograph: Tim Anderson / Taylor Herring)



(Photograph: Matt Alexander /PA Wire)

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Your Engineering Heritage: Electromagnetic Quackery and Bizarre Medical Devices

BY Nathan Brewer Posted: 13 Nov 2015

ieeeusa.org

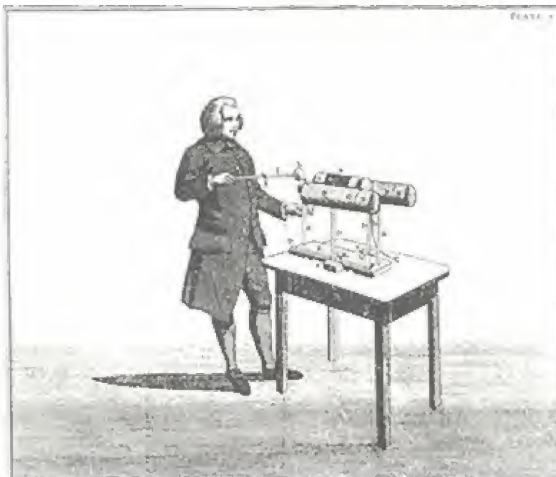


The electrical

Your Engineering Heritage: Electromagnetic Quackery and Bizarre Medical Devices

revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries sparked one of the most profound shifts in human culture. Among other things, usage of electricity opened new doors for communication, transportation, information processing, and automation. It completely transformed society and gave humanity new tools to understand the world and ourselves. Electrical technologies also revolutionized the medical industry. An inadvertent side effect of this transformation was the creation of an industry of pseudoscience involving bizarre electromagnetic devices that purported to cure nearly every disease and ailment.

With the invention of the Leyden Jar in the mid-1740s, electrostatic devices were frequently constructed for various novelty purposes. It was around this time when medical electrostatic devices arose. Using charges of static electricity to deliver shocks to a patient, medical electricity was used to treat various ailments from tumors, ulcers, gout, fevers, and headaches.



Edward Nairne and his electrical machine, 1783. Nairne's machine was an electrostatic device intended for the cure of various ailments and disorders through the use of electric shock.

Legitimate understanding of the relationship between the human body and electricity began to develop in the late 18th century. Luigi Galvani conducted a number of experiments using frogs and scientifically demonstrated a relationship between biology and electricity. It took several more decades for the mathematical laws of electromagnetism to be fully described, and

several more decades beyond that before practical and legitimate uses for electricity in

medicine were implemented. However, the lack of a clear understanding of electromagnetic theory throughout the 19th century did not stop creative entrepreneurs from developing devices that purported to cure medical ailments.

In addition to electroshock, one of the earliest methods to gain significant traction with the public was the theory of animal magnetism, or Mesmerism, developed by German doctor Franz Anton Mesmer. In 1774, Mesmer claimed to cure Francisca Österlin by using a series of magnets in conjunction with a fluid containing iron that was ingested by the patient. Mesmer believed that an external stimulus of magnetism triggered what he believed was the body's own magnetic fluid, initiating its natural healing effects. Mesmer lectured publically on the treatments over the next few years, and while he left Vienna in scandal after failing to cure a woman of blindness, his treatments and methods became incredibly popular and spawned an industry of professional magnetizers. Charles Dickens learned some of the basic techniques and used it to treat some of his friends. Mesmerism even influenced the English language, lending the word "mesmerize" to its lexicon.



A practitioner of Mesmerism

Legitimate advances through the middle of the 19th century in electromagnetic theory by Faraday and Maxwell led to a greater understanding of how electricity and magnetism work. With greater understanding of electricity, devices which operated on the properties and language of magnetism and galvanism became less common as electrotherapy gained popularity. Some inventors, like prolific manufacturer George A. Scott, continued to use magnetic devices, but preferred the term

"electric" in the marketing materials. Scott patented numerous devices, including electric insoles, an electric corset, and an electric hairbrush which claimed it grew hair on a man "whose head was as bald as a bladder of lard."



D.C. Moorhead's graduated magnetic machine, advertised in the Gazette of the Union in 1848, purported to cure, among other ailments, rheumatism, gout, headaches, paralysis, epilepsy, dyspepsia, and act as a preventive for apoplexy.

Electric baths gained popularity in France in the 1870s, where a low current was administered to the patient while in a bathtub, purporting to help rheumatism, and electric belts were frequently sold, aimed at men's sexual health. Electrotherapy treatments like these were so popular that in 1887 the U.S. Congress had a device attached to the Capitol Building's electrical system, allowing congressmen to easily receive treatments during congressional sessions.



1882 advertisement for George A. Scott's electric corset

Skepticism around the claims made by electromagnetic therapies has always been present. In 1784, King Louis XVI of France commissioned members of the Faculty of Medicine to investigate the claims made by Mesmer and other professional magnetizers. This investigation determined that there was no evidence for a physical magnetic fluid, and that any purported cures came from a placebo. Knowledge of medical practices in the late 18th and 19th centuries can be paralleled to the contemporary understanding of electricity, in that both areas were still in their early developmental phases. The medical and electrical industries both made rapid advancements in the latter half of the 19th century, causing electrotherapy and animal

magnetism to fall out of favor with legitimate medical and electrical engineering organizations.



Taking an electric bath, circa 1870s

Formal attempts to control ethical breaches within the electrical engineering community date back to the early 1900s. A code of ethics was proposed to the AIEE in 1907 by Charles Steinmetz, Harold Buck and Skyler Skaats Wheeler, of which one of the clauses states that "[the electrical engineer should]... discourage wrong or exaggerated statements on engineering subjects published in the press or otherwise, especially if these statements are made for the purpose of, or may lead to

inducing the public to participate in unworthy schemes." This code of ethics was adopted by the AIEE in 1912, and in the same year, the American Medical Association published a multivolume compilation, a collection of articles on various kinds of quackery, including electrotherapy. Despite these pushes from both the electrical and medical professions, electrotherapy treatments did not fall out of favor with the public until the 1930s. In 1938, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the *Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act*, which mandated the review of new drugs and banned false therapeutic claims in drugs; and in 1976 the *Act* was expanded to include the oversight of medical devices.

Many of these devices and treatments may seem ridiculous today. Though taking an electric bath or drinking a radium cocktail might be unthinkable to the modern reader, quackery manages to survive in various forms. Despite our advanced understanding of biology, medicine and electromagnetism, and explicitly defined government regulation of medical devices and drugs, modern pseudoscience movements are able to thrive because of distrust of the pharmaceutical industry and popularization of the internet. Some of these have adversely impacted the efficiency of public health programs, introducing epidemic outbreaks of easily preventable disease like whooping cough and measles. In a twist of irony, it is unlikely that pseudoscientific cures will ever be extinct, despite the fact that we live in an age

of great scientific and medical literacy, where a vast wealth of legitimate information can be accessed by anyone.

Nathan Brewer is digital content manager at the IEEE History Center at the Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, N.J. Visit the IEEE History Center's Web page at: www.ieee.org/organizations/history_center.

Comments Comment Policy

James Wood

An intriguing glimpse into the fascinating subject of electric quackery.

Posted on 11/25/15 12:52 PM.

William Buchman

These silly things are still here. In particular magnets are still used to cure everything. Even just running water by a magnet is supposed to provide medicinal properties to the water. I do not know if magnetic water softeners have retained recent popularity.

In the long run however, the theory of evolution is likely to retain validity. If this belief in quack cures is truly harmful, such believers will be replaced by others. Similarly, if electromagnetic radiation from cell phones is more harmful than beneficial, evolution will take care of that as well.

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23 November, 2015 - 00:47valdar

Mythology in Romania: Exploring Beliefs about Witchcraft and the Devil

An old Romanian proverb says: *Do not speak badly of the Devil because you cannot know to whom you will belong.* According to popular Romanian mythology, it is not considered difficult to establish a connection with the Devil. He can appear quickly, happy with the availability of the person who wishes to be initiated into the secrets of witchcraft. Those who wanted to contact the Devil used to go to a crossroad where they called his name or they yelled out loud "Hey! Hey! Hey!" and the Devil was said to come to them. In other cases, staying in an



Francisco Goya, *Witches' Sabbath (El aquelarre)*.

unclean place was sufficient in order to obtain the infernal aid.

Ancient legends say that there was once a woman who wanted to become a witch, so she went to the river where she waited until midnight. At that time, the Devil came out of the water and asked her why she was sitting there. The woman replied that she wanted to be made a witch, so the Devil told her the necessary condition. She had to agree to dance with him during each full moon. Legend has it that the woman accepted and she was made a witch.



The Devil and a woman on horseback
Illustration by Hartmann Schedel

The Devil and a woman on horseback. Illustration by Hartmann Schedel (public domain)

Still, not all witches are very skilled when it comes to magic. Another popular story starts from a chant which begins as follows: "*Oschi, oschi, Scaraoschi! Cu gura sa te invat, cu ochii sa nu te vad.*" ("Devil, Devil, Devil! With the mouth to teach you, with my eyes not to see you"). The witch was a young woman from Barbosi village who was a beginner at magic, so she spoke the chant wrong. Instead of saying "*with my eyes not to see you*", she said "*with my eyes to see you*". As a result, the demon appeared at her window and the young woman only managed to escape him at sunrise when the rooster sang. According to the description, the demon was red and very skinny. He danced in front of the windows and hit them making the entire house tremble.

Depiction of a red demon, like the one in the Romanian tale. Fresco detail from the Rila Monastery. (public domain)

Other witch stories fall under a more amusing category. It is said that a witch kept stealing the milk from a peasant's cows. Upset, the man decided to catch the witch, so he hid himself in the paddock and waited. At midnight, the witch came and began to drain the milk of the cows in a bag made of hair. The man could see everything, but he could not react in any way, being almost petrified. Once the witch finished taking the milk from all the cows, she went to the man and asked him: "*-Are you sitting Ivan?*". The man replied mechanically as though he was taking in his sleep: "*-I am sitting.*". Then the witch put something in his hand and told him before leaving: "*-Here, hold this and keep sitting!*". The wife who waited for her husband until dawn went the next morning to look for him. She found him sitting in a



Depiction of a red demon, like the one in the Romanian tale. Fresco detail from the Rila Monastery.

corner of the stable firmly grasping in his hands a big pile of dung.

In Romanian mythology, it is said that each wizard and witch has access to a Black Book which contains all the incantations, chants and magic formulas. Usually, before dying, wizards pass on this knowledge to an apprentice, but sometimes such books remain without a master. Such is the case of the following story. A young man found such a book left behind by a wizard who had died. Courageous, the young man opened the book and began reading from it. As he read, in front of him demons appeared asking for work.

The young man first gave them easy tasks and, then, more and more complex ones. Still, the devils always managed to fulfill them and kept returning asking again for work. Not knowing what else to have them do, the young man did not give them any tasks. Then, the restless devils killed the young man and no one

ever dared to open the Black Book ever again. It is said that only wizards know what tasks to give to the devils by making them do things such as making ropes out of water and sand or stopping rivers from flowing into the sea. Still, this story remains as a warning to all those who dare play with the evil forces without knowing the price that must be paid for the recklessness of their actions.

Featured image: Francisco Goya, Witches' Sabbath (El aquelarre). (public domain)

Ancient Origins © 2013 - 2015

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NEW YORK, Aug. 13.—A human head, supposed to be that of William Guldensuppe, who was murdered in 1898, was found today near Dutch Mills. Martin Thorne was executed at Sing Sing for the murder of Gulden-suppe, and Mrs. Naack, who was concerned in the case, still has more than nine of her fifteen years to serve in Auburn penitentiary.

Wildlife officials releasing fake snakes around state landmarks

TALLAHASSEE (AP) --

mynews13.com

Last Updated: Wednesday, December 09, 2015, 4:01 PM

If you happen to notice an increase in snakes around the state, don't worry. These guys won't bite you.

Florida wildlife officials are releasing fake snakes around state landmarks to raise awareness about nonnative species.

The hunt began Tuesday and is part of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Python Challenge to promote Everglades conservation efforts. The python removal competition in South Florida kicks off Jan. 16 and ends Feb. 14.

Officials hope the hunt will remind residents that they can get involved and help be part of the solution in dealing with invasive Florida species, like Burmese pythons.

"The search for these snakes is designed to remind people that they can get involved and help be a part of the solution to invasive species in Florida," said Kristen Sommers, wildlife impacts management section leader for the FWC. "The FWC hopes that the 2016 Python Challenge activates more people to go out, look for and either properly report or (when possible) remove Burmese pythons from the wild."

To report nonnative fish and wildlife, call the FWC's Invasive Species Hotline at 888-IVE-GOT1888-IVE-GOT1 FREE (888-483-4681/888-483-4681 FREE), report your sighting online at IveGot1.org or download the IveGot1 smartphone app.

Earlier this month, a 9-foot-long anaconda was euthanized after it was spotted by a citizen along the banks of the St. Johns River in Brevard County.

For more information on Burmese pythons and other nonnative species in Florida, go to MyFWC.com/nonnatives.

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Family of Joyce Skees still hoping for answers in unsolved murder 19 years later

Saturday, December 5 2015 8:00 PM EST

wdrb.com

Posted: Dec 04, 2015 3:06 PM PST Updated: Dec 04, 2015 3:37 PM PST



Joyce Skees (Family Photo)

Joyce Skees (Family Photo)
Joyce's sister, Janice Farish,
and her son, Ryan Skees.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WDRB) —
The murder of Joyce Skees is
the Shively Police
Department's oldest cold
case. Skees' family is hoping
for a renewed push for tips 19
years after she was killed,
hoping someone who knows
what happened will finally
come forward.



Joyce's sister, Janice Farish, and her son, Ryan Skees.

"It's complete disbelief," Mark
Clore said of his sister's
murder.

"She was shot, they ran. We
were told that there were two
people running from the
scene," sister Janice Farish
said.

It was December 3, 1996.
Joyce Skees, a sister, wife
and mother to two young

boys, was murdered in the parking lot of the bank where she worked on Dixie Highway in
Shively. Her youngest son Ryan was only five years old.

"I remember from the moment we were told to the funeral," said Ryan Skees.

At the time of the murder a rendering was released of the suspect based off witness
accounts. Then in 2009 Shively police released a new age progression rendering.

"I've lost my vengeance and it's turned to vigilance. You know, I want respect for my sister. I
want justice for my sister," Clore said.

Including justice for her two boys who had to grow up without a mom.

"There are a lot of pictures especially that I can cherish and look back on that show a lot of her personality and how wonderful she really was," Skees said.

Her personality can be seen in this home video from a family party.

"Happy Birthday Daniel! Thanks for inviting me... oh and the kids too!" Joyce Skees said.

"Hearing her voice is just wonderful," Clore said.

Although time has passed, the grieving never ends and not knowing who or why is the hardest part.

While the tips have slowed down, Shively Police Sergeant Josh Myers says many of the anonymous messages are open ended.

"Then again there were questions that we then had that prevented us from following up on it as much as we wanted to," Myers said.

"Sometimes people's situations change and their environment changes and maybe you're not afraid to come forward now, well now is the time to do it," Farish said.

It's the least that can be done, she said, for a family who was robbed of so many more memories.

"Last year when I got married I didn't have a mother there standing next to my father watching me get married and I didn't have a mother to dance with," Ryan Skees said.

If you have any information in this cold case, you are asked to call the Shively Police Department or Kentuckiana Crime Stoppers.

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Russia: Famous Moscow cemeteries to install free wi-fi - BBC News [bbc.com](#)

By News from Elsewhere... ..as found by BBC Monitoring

• 10 December 2015

Three of Moscow's most-visited cemeteries are about to enter the digital age, with the installation of full wi-fi connectivity.

Visitors will be able to browse the internet for free at the Novodevichy, Troyekurovskoye and Vagankovo cemeteries starting from the first half of 2016, according to the Moscow city website. The head of the city's funerary services office, Artem Yekimov, says the aim is to help visitors find out more about famous people buried there and their graves - and make visiting the cemeteries more "comfortable".

Telecommunications company YS System says it offered to install the wi-fi networks after hearing about plans to create rest areas - dubbed "zones of psychological comfort" - at the cemeteries. "In a survey carried out by us in the summer, respondents complained about the lack of internet at the cemetery," company head Yevgeny Abramov tells the Klerk.ru website. "While we were thinking about how to implement this project with the greatest possible sensitivity and respect for the departed, an answer popped up by itself."

Of the three cemeteries in question, Novodevichy is perhaps the most famous and one of the most popular tourist sites in Moscow. Among the famous names buried there are writer Anton Chekhov, former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and the late Russian President Boris Yeltsin. More recently, opposition politician Boris Nemtsov was laid to rest at Troyekurovskoye cemetery after his assassination in February 2015.

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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

Feast Spread For 3 Phantom Guests (1908)



NEW YORK, Dec. 26.—It was indeed a strange Christmas dinner that Henry B. Tannehill ate at a local hotel yesterday. He sat at a table at which there were four other chairs, but all of them vacant. In front of each, however, there was placed a complete Christmas repast, which was later taken away untouched.

Tannehill dined with phantom guests, the spirits of his sister and her three children, all dead. Of an adventurous spirit, Tannehill, once a resident of this city, has wandered far and wide, and returning here Monday from Alaska, he learned of the death of his sister and her children.

His explanation of the weird dinner is perhaps the best. He said:

"On the day I left my sister's home I told her that I would be back next Christmas or the one after, and that the treat for them would be the best that money could buy. I got out and hustled and saved considerable money in the Klondike and when I arrived here the other night I ran over to the East side and began to look up the folks."

"It didn't take me long to find out what I least expected. My sister went out to a store one day and left the children alone; when she came back they were dead, burned. A little later she herself died of pneumonia and worry."

Alone in the world, Tannehill is undecided as to his future and says probably he will resume his wanderings.

From the *San Francisco Call*, Dec. 27, 1908:

**"FEAST SPREAD FOR 3 PHANTOM GUESTS
Wanderer in Klondike Returns for Christmas Feast With
Sister and Children
Relatives Being Dead, Prospector Places Plates and Dines
Before Vacant Chairs**

NEW YORK, Dec. 26.—It was indeed a strange Christmas dinner that Henry B. Tannehill ate at a local hotel yesterday. He sat at a table at which there were four other chairs, but all of them vacant. In front of each, however, there was placed a complete Christmas repast, which was later taken away

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burned. A little later she herself died of pneumonia and worry.'

Alone in the world, Tannehill is undecided as to his future and says probably he will resume his wanderings."

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Feeding the Body to Save the Soul: The Bizarre Custom of Sin-Eating

oddlyhistorical.com



Peasant Funeral

Death is as much a part of living as being born. This morbid fact has been handled very differently by cultures throughout history. Much has been written on this site about mummification, from the accidental to the deliberate. Certainly mummification was a method among many cultures to attaining eternal peace in the afterlife. Christian cultures, on the other hand, believed that eternal life came in the spiritual realm. While it was important in many Christian sects to have a body buried whole and in consecrated ground,

they believed that said body would be raised at judgment day and transmogrified into a new body that would meet God face to face. This is why the custom of profane burial in England and other parts of Europe was considered one of the ultimate sanctions—a body that was desecrated and buried in unconsecrated ground would not be able to participate in this great resurrection.

There were other strange customs in England surrounding the treatment of the dead. Like the profane burials, it was a collision of Christian theology and local folkways. Unlike the profane burials, it was not meant as a punishment toward the deceased but rather a way to absolve the deceased of any sins. This was done by having another person—dubbed a sin eater—take upon themselves the burden of that wickedness, by quite literally eating their sins.

Bread, salt, and milk (or beer)

Most funerary practices involve food in some way shape or form. Some cultures have specific meals that are traditionally eaten after a funeral, while in more modern times it's customary to eat a meal after a funeral but it is not necessarily limited to traditional fare. The corpse is generally not present for such meals, depending on tradition.

In the custom of sin-eating, however, the corpse is very much present for the meal. In fact, it is central. The custom, which was mainly practiced in parts of Wales and Scotland, generally involved hiring an impoverished local to eat a meal over the body of the dead for the grand sum of six pence. The meal itself varied a bit from region to region, but generally speaking it consisted of bread, salt, and beer. Some regions swapped the beer for milk.

The idea was that, by consuming the food over the corpse, the sin-eater would take upon themselves the sin of the deceased. The custom was usually employed when someone died unexpectedly. Naturally, this did not sit well with local church officials, who saw it not only as superstition but perhaps as an affront to their own authority. Still, many priests looked the other way, since the custom lasted from at least the 17th century to the late 19th and early 20th century.

The Life of a Sin-Eater

Every community in areas where sin-eating was practiced had a village sin-eater. Typically these individuals were low status members of the community, who were desperate enough to take on the sins of others for money. With their ritual uncleanness came social stigmatization. As the village sin-eater partook in the ritual more often, they became more and more unclean in the eyes of their peers.

However, not all sin-eaters were social pariahs or poor, desperate beggars. The last known sin-eater, Richard Munslow, passed away in 1906. Running counter to the general trend, he was a prosperous farmer in the area around Shropshire village. So, not all the sin-eaters were necessarily outcasts, but neither was it an acceptable occupation. No mention seems to be made about what their fate would be for taking upon themselves the sins of others when their own death came. Perhaps if they were fortunate some kind soul would eat their sins and take that burden upon themselves, leaving the sin-eater in peace.

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Feral: The children raised by wolves

bbc.com



Oxana Malaya, Ukraine, 1991 (Credit: Julia Fullerton-Batten)



Oxana Malaya, Ukraine, 1991 (Credit: Credit: Julia Fullerton-Batten)



Shamdeo, India, 1972 (Credit: Credit: Julia Fullerton-Batten)

• By Fiona Macdonald

12 October 2015

Oxana Malaya,
Ukraine, 1991

Shamdeo, India, 1972

Marina Chapman,
Colombia, 1959

John Ssebunya,
Uganda, 1991

Madina, Russia, 2013

Sujit Kumar, Fiji, 1978

Ivan Mishukov, Russia, 1998

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Marina Chapman, Colombia, 1959 (Credit: Credit: Julia Fullerton-Batten)



John Ssebunya, Uganda, 1991 (Credit: Credit: Julia Fullerton-Batten)



Madina, Russia, 2013 (Credit: Credit: Julia Fullerton-Batten)



Sujit Kumar, Fiji, 1978 (Credit: Credit: Julia Fullerton-Batten)



Ivan Mishukov, Russia, 1998 (Credit: Credit: Julia Fullerton-Batten)

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Fighting the plague in medieval towns - Medievalists.net

medievalists.net

December 4, 2013 By Medievalists.net

A new article is revealing how French towns coped with waves of plague outbreaks and other diseases in the late Middle Ages. It explains how these towns they made vigorous attempts to improve hygiene, employ doctors and isolate those infected so they would not spread the disease.



Engraving depicting the Saints Innocents cemetery in Paris, around the year 1550

The article, "Plague Ordinances and the Management of Infectious Diseases in Northern French Towns, c.1450-c.1560," by Neil Murphy, focuses on cities such as Paris, Rouen, Amiens and Tournai, making use of surviving municipal records. During this period, outbreaks of plague occurred about once every ten years and municipal councils were seeking out ways to help prevent and deal with the epidemics.

One of the first measures that towns would take would be to keep the streets clean and improve hygiene, as it was

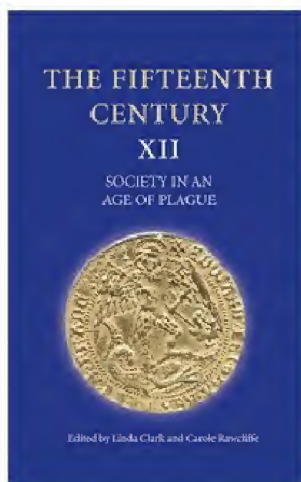
believed that polluted air was one of the major factors in the spread of disease. Street cleaning and refuse removal was done in some towns by the 14th century, and areas that were especially polluted, like markets, would be "targeted for vigorous cleaning by specially-appointed teams of workmen." There was also a range of new sanitary laws during this period, such as a prohibition on public urination in Abbeville in 1459 and a demand that all houses in Rouen have their own latrine in 1518.

Murphy notes that in the towns you would have a "plague industry" – people who would be employed to deal with these epidemics, including teams to bury the dead, and surgeons and physicians to treat the ill. In the summer of 1458, Abbeville's town council hired between 12 and 16 men as gravediggers for 12 s. per week. In 1483 the same town hired a barber-surgeon who would bleed patients (it was wrongly believed that bleeding victims was a good treatment), but he died two weeks into the job. The town council was only able to hire a replacement after doubling his wages. Meanwhile in Amiens in 1478, a group of Franciscan monks agreed to pledge their services to the town to take care of the ill – the town council in return send them food and supplies and helped pay for the upkeep of their buildings.

University-trained physicians would also be hired to give advice to town councils and help

determine which type of sickness was threatening the inhabitants. Throughout the fifteenth-century it became more understood that it was important to implement quarantine measures and "limiting the contact between the healthy and the sick." For example, in 1402 the town of Saint-Flour confined all prostitutes in a house until an outbreak was over, while in Amiens in 1493 and 1519 they hired mercenaries to guard the city's gates so that no one could enter or leave the town.

While in some towns those who caught the disease and their families were confined to their houses for several weeks, although efforts were made to provide them with food. A more drastic measure was introduced at Troyes, in which those who were sick and all their relatives would be banished from town for at least three months and had their homes burned to the ground. By the sixteenth-century many towns had pest houses, where all those who were sick would be taken and treated (as well confined until they either died or got better). Murphy also notes that these towns were also gradually imposing stricter conditions on lepers and the poor, especially against wandering vagrants who they wanted to keep out of their cities.



9781843838753

Murphy writes, "prior to the 1450s, on the rare occasions when councils did respond to the plague, their approach tended to be reactive. By isolating the sick, cleansing their goods and imposing sanitary regulations, they now took practical steps to limit the spread and severity of each epidemic. How effective these measures were is difficult to gauge. Some outbreaks of plague were less severe than others, though the extent to which this may have been due to efficacy of legislation is unclear. Coping with infectious diseases became a regular part of urban life during this period, as northern French towns faced outbreaks of plague during every decade from the 1450s to the 1560s, in addition to the other epidemic diseases, both new and established, with which they had to contend."

The article, "Plague Ordinances and the Management of Infectious Diseases in Northern French Towns, c.1450-c.1560," appears in *The Fifteenth Century, Vol. XII: Society in Age of Plague*, edited by Linda Clark and Carole Rawcliffe. This book contains ten essays that focus on the Black Death and the plague in western Europe. Neil Murphy is a lecturer at **Northumbria University**.

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Germany 'exorcism' death: Five S Koreans held in Frankfurt - BBC News

bbc.com



Among those arrested at the hotel was the victim's 15-year-old son

German police have arrested five relatives of South Korean woman who died in an apparent exorcism ritual, prosecutors say.

The 41-year-old woman was found dead in a Frankfurt hotel room after being gagged and severely beaten.

Chief prosecutor Nadja Niesen said the family members wanted to "drive out a demon" they believed had possessed her.

Police later discovered another suspected victim, a badly injured

woman, in the town of Sulzbach.

She was found suffering hypothermia and dehydration in the garage of a house the group had rented in the town west of Frankfurt, according to reports.

Among the five South Koreans arrested on suspicion of murder was the woman's 15-year-old son, who investigators believe may have taken part in the violence.

A 44-year-old woman was also being held with her 21-year-old son and 19-year-old daughter, and another boy of 15.

The 41-year-old woman had been severely beaten in her chest and stomach. A towel and a cloth-covered coat hanger had been pushed into her mouth to stifle her screams.

The chief prosecutor said the victim had been subjected to an ordeal that lasted at least two hours. "I've never come across anything like it," she said.

The Associated Press reported that the police had been alerted by a Catholic priest, but the German news agency DPA said it was unclear who had found the dead victim at the Frankfurt InterContinental hotel.

DPA said investigators did not know which religious group the suspects belonged to. It said the five suspects had arrived in Frankfurt about six weeks earlier.

Frankfurt lies in the Catholic diocese of Limburg and officials there said exorcism only ever took place under very strict rules and supervision, and with the bishop's permission.

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Florida Man Dressed As Darth Vader Robs Convenience Store: Police

David Moyer

Posted: 11/23/2015 02:55 PM EST | Edited: 11/23/2015 07:23 PM EST

huffingtonpost.com

He escaped in a silver auto, not a Death Star.



Jacksonville Police Dept.

Looks like the force came down on Darth Vader.

The police force, that is.

Jacksonville sheriff's deputies arrested a man on Sunday who allegedly attempted to rob a convenience store wearing a Darth Vader mask and chest plate around 5:30 p.m.

The suspect, later identified as Jacob Jeremy Mercer, was carrying a silver handgun, not a

light saber, according to Jacksonville.com.

Police said when 32-year-old Mercer showed the pistol and demanded money from the clerk, the employee responded by chucking a jar of blue cheese dressing at the suspect.

The jar of dressing hit Mercer on the face, according to WPTV.com.

A man inside the store who asked to be identified only as "Ricardo" witnessed the altercation and admitted being a little frightened by it.

"We looked at each other for a couple of seconds it was a little scary," Ricardo told FirstCoastNews.com.

Ricardo said Mercer's face was bleeding from the jar of dressing during his escape.

"He ran to his car sped off driving recklessly through a stop sign and took a right onto first Street, I lost him from there," he told the station.

Police found Mercer's vehicle -- a silver car with New York plates, not a Death Star -- a short time later. Officers then went to the place where Mercer was staying and asked him to come outside. His nose was still bleeding, according to Jacksonville.com.

Mercer, of Tonawanda, New York, was arrested for armed robbery after a witness identified him as the robber.

Police said they found several handguns and ammunition in Mercer's backpack.



Jacksonville Police Dept.

This isn't the first time a robber has dressed as Darth Vader.

Back in March, a man dressed as Vader forced his way into a North Carolina bank and robbed it at gunpoint, stealing thousands of dollars in the process.

In May 2012, another man in a Darth Vader mask robbed a bank in Toledo, Ohio, storming away with an undisclosed amount of cash.

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August 2015

From Raiders to Traders: The Viking-Arab Trade Exchange

Susanne Watts
American Public University System

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Susanne Watts is a native German, who moved to the United States in March 1994 to marry her then-soldier husband, Sean. As a child of the Cold War she lived through some of its hot periods. Growing up a mere ten miles from the former East-German border, her West-German hometown is located in the famous Fulda Gap, near OP Alpha. Susanne graduated from American Public University with a BA in History in November 2014 and is currently contemplating graduate school. Her historical interests include Germany from 1871 to 1933, the US Gilded Age through the 1920s, the Great War, and the history of the Cold War – particularly as it pertains to her hometown area. Susanne and Sean currently share an abode with their Rubenesque feline, Rugby. The three live in North Carolina, the Old North State.

From Raiders to Traders: The Viking-Arab Trade Exchange

Susanne Watts

The Viking raids across Europe brought them into contact with other cultures, including Muslim Arabs. Although there are no known Viking settlements in the Arab lands, both cultures interacted with each other through their respective exploration of Europe. Contact between Vikings and Arabs occurred mainly in the area of what would become Russia. While there is scarce evidence that Arabs visited the homelands of the Vikings, or as they called them, the “people of the North,” artifacts found across Scandinavia, and especially in Sweden, point to an extensive long-distance trade exchange between the two very different cultures. It was the promise of access to much needed and coveted silver that set off the Viking exploration into Europe, and brought Viking raiders into contact with the Arabs. In their quest for silver, the Vikings discovered and accessed valuable trade routes to Constantinople that led to an extensive trade exchange with the Arab world. Seizing upon the opportunity to enrich themselves, the Vikings came into contact with Arabic wealth and treasures through their raids, and soon realized the potential of a peaceful trade exchange.

The Vikings came into contact with Muslim Arabs during their exploration of the Iberian Peninsula. One of the first contacts occurred with Muslim Spain in 844 when a Viking fleet of fifty-four ships sailed from their base in Brittany to Spain in order to raid the Caliphate’s treasures.¹ The raiding campaign was successful, as the Vikings conquered Lisbon and Seville, destroyed numerous other towns, and even threatened the capital of al-Andalus, Córdoba. However, the Muslims were able to drive back the Viking invaders and built “an effective coastal defence against new attacks.”² Having seen the riches of the Caliphate, the Vikings were determined to return, and embarked on a second raiding campaign in 859, this time with a much bigger fleet of sixty-two ships. Again, the raiding campaign itself was a success, as their ships were “so fully laden with plunder that they sat low in the water.”³ However, on the Vikings’ journey back to their home base in Brittany, the Muslim naval fleet attacked and destroyed the majority of the Vikings’ ships. With that, Viking exploration of and interaction with Muslim Spain ended. The two raids gave both cultures a first glimpse at each other’s military capabilities and characteristics. Prior to the Vikings’ invasion of

the Caliphate, the Arabs had no interaction with the “people of the North.” To the Muslim Arabs, the Vikings appeared “as a sudden, mysterious, military threat.”⁴ The Vikings for the first time were confronted with an enemy that was well organized on land as well as on the sea, where Vikings were used to supremacy.

Viking interaction with the people of Eastern Europe, particularly those in the area around the Volga River, was markedly different from their encounters in Muslim Spain. For one, the Vikings, called Varangians by the Slavs, would establish permanent settlements there, and would later be identified as the *Rus'*, giving the name to the land that would be eventually known as Russia. It was this contact that would set the stage for future trade exchange and extensive long-distance trading with the Arabic world, as well as the Viking-*Rus'* exploration into Byzantium. According to the *Russian Primary Chronicle*, at the same time the Vikings launched their second raiding campaign in Muslim Spain in 859, “Varangians from beyond the sea imposed tribute upon the Slavs.”⁵ However, while the Slavs successfully dispelled the Vikings, they were unable to establish a stable government, forcing them to “seek a prince who may rule over [them] and judge [them] according to the Law.”⁶ Thus, they looked to the Varangians to provide strong leadership and rule over them. However, even before they were invited back to establish law and order over the Slavs, Swedish Vikings had established a presence in the area, and established trading contacts with Arabic merchants across the Caspian Sea. The raiding campaign on Constantinople in 860 by these Swedish Vikings marked the beginning of not only a long-distance trade exchange but also an exchange of military service between the Byzantine Empire and Viking Scandinavia.⁷

The Vikings' demand for silver was one of the most important factors that influenced their commercial contacts into Russia and Constantinople. Constantinople at the time was one of the world's most important trading centers, and the Vikings realized the opportunities to amass personal wealth by not only engaging in trade with the empire but by also offering their military service to the Byzantine Emperors. Viking warriors were well respected, and their fighting spirit was legendary. It comes as no surprise then that “the emperors valued the Varangians above all for their loyalty and courage, their fighting qualities and ability to carry out commands efficiently and without questions.”⁸ Service in the Varangian Guard was prestigious as well as profitable. In addition to their regular salary, Varangian Guard soldiers received gifts at the coronation of a new emperor

and they shared in the booty while on military campaign for the empire.⁹

Not only were the Varangians highly regarded in their military service to the Byzantine Emperor, they also received preferential treatment in their commercial trading activities with the empire. It was in Constantinople that the Viking and Arab trade exchange flourished, as the city was regarded a major trading center, bringing together exotic goods from the East and West. The Vikings brought much sought after furs, amber, and slaves to the Byzantines and thus the Arab market. In return, the Vikings received Arab silver coins, silk textiles, and jewelry. Clearly, it appears that the merchandise traded were luxury items intended for the wealthy of both Viking and Arab society.¹⁰ It is thus not surprising that this extensive and expensive trade relationship needed to be regulated and protected. The importance of ensuring safe delivery of the exotic northern merchandise is evident in several agreements, beginning in 907. These agreements not only established the commercial trading relationship between Byzantium and the Varangians, they also aimed to create a permanent peace between the two peoples. In essence, Byzantium awarded the Varangians privileged trading status by regulating the trade, providing insurance for their goods, and awarding generous privileges for the Varangian merchants. The *Kiev Chronicle* mentions several treaties regulating Byzantine-Varangian trade:

If they [Rus'] come as merchants they shall be fed for six months; bread, wine, meat, fish and fruit. Bath shall be prepared for them as often as they wish. When they return to Rus' again, they shall be equipped by our emperor with proviant, anchors, ropes and sails and everything needed.¹¹

These treaties highlight the importance of the evolving long-distance trade relationship between the Varangians, Viking Scandinavia, Byzantium, and the Arabs. Byzantine Constantinople acted as the main trading center in facilitating this international trade relationship.

One important figure of the Varangian trade connection was Harald Sigurdson, also known as Harald Hardrada, who served in the Varangian Guard from around 1030 to 1042.¹² This future King of Norway used his service in Byzantium to amass personal wealth that would allow him to return to his native land and claim the throne in 1046. His adventures are well documented in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, in which he devotes a Saga to the future king. During his

service, Harald travelled across the Byzantine Empire, fighting campaigns in Africa, and the Middle East, as far as Palestine, and amassed a great amount of wealth.¹³ Sturluson reports, Harald “gathered great wealth in gold, jewels, and all sorts of precious things; and all the wealth he gathered there which he did not need for his expenses, he sent with trusty men of his own north to Novgorod to King Jarisleif’s care and keeping.”¹⁴ Harald’s travels reveal a rich history of contact with cultures very different from his own. The wealth he was able to accumulate was eventually transferred to his native land, and used in the Viking practice of gift giving to ensure loyalty and support in order to secure political power. One such exotic gift was “an ingot of gold the size of a man’s head,” which Harald presented to King Magnus upon his return to Norway.¹⁵ Harald exchanged not only exotic treasures from his foreign travels but also stories, thus helping Scandinavians to imagine the world and its diverse cultures beyond their known lands.

While Viking sources are rather scarce on their trading exchange and interaction with the Arabic world, Arabic writers have left a plethora of reports about their encounters with the “people of the North.” It is evident in the written Arabic sources that they observed the Vikings and their customs with great interest. These sources reveal an extensive interaction between the two cultures. For the educated Muslim of the tenth century, only four peoples existed that possessed a civilization of culture: Arabs, Persians, Indians, and the Byzantines, and while Europe was known as a geographical entity the Arabs did not view it as a cultural concept.¹⁶ The Muslim Arabs certainly acknowledged the existence of other peoples, however “the centre of the world was the lands of Islam, stretching from Spain across North Africa to the Middle East.”¹⁷ Several writers of the ninth and tenth century however give detailed descriptions of the northern region, its people as well as its flora and fauna. Al-Bīrūnī reports that the people living in the far northern region use wooden sleds and skis for travel through the snow-covered plains.¹⁸ Prior to the expansion of Islam into Europe there was also little interaction with other ethnic groups, and even after the establishment of the al-Andalus Caliphate the Muslim Arabs were not too interested in the northern lands. According to the Arab worldview, the “people of the North” did not concern themselves with science, thus they were of little interest to the Arabs who considered themselves intellectually as well as culturally superior.¹⁹ Overall, the Varangians had little to offer to the learned Muslim Arabs.

At the time of the Viking raids in Spain, Muslim Arabs had very little

knowledge about the seafaring raiders. The Viking invasion of Spain in 844 marked one of the first contacts between the two cultures. Arabic writers recorded the Viking invasion, noting that the fire-worshipping ‘al-Majus (al-Rus) “took captives, slaughtered, burnt and plundered.”²⁰ This first interaction certainly helped to reinforce the Arabs’ perception of the uncivilized Vikings. While contact with the Vikings was limited to raids in Western Europe, Arabs had a greater opportunity in Eastern Europe to interact with the Vikings. Arabs did not seem to be interested in travelling to Scandinavia in order to conduct trade although the Spanish Arab al-Tartuschi reported that the Danish trading center of Hedeby was poor and dirty.²¹ Due to the importance of the Byzantine trade exchange Viking merchants were a common sight in Constantinople in the late ninth and tenth century, thus interacting with Arab merchants. The trade exchange benefitted both: Arabs desired Viking furs and weapons, and the Vikings were in need of silver in the form of Arabic coins and jewelry. However, Arabs also observed Vikings in their settlements. One of the better-known accounts is that of Ibn Fadlan, an Arab chronicler who was sent to the King of the Bulgars of the Middle Volga by the Caliph of Baghdad in 921.²² Ibn Fadlan’s report is remarkable in that it is a first-hand account by an Arab observing the Viking *Rus*’ in their everyday life. He admires their perfect physiques just like the Byzantine Emperors admired the physical strength of their Varangian Guards. What is of great value and helped reinforce the Arabs’ view of the culturally inferior Vikings is Ibn Fadlan’s detailed observations of the *Rus*’ life. Ibn Fadlan calls them “the filthiest of Allah’s creatures,” and is appalled by their lack of hygiene.²³ He then describes in great detail various aspects of the *Rus*’ customs, paying particular attention to their funeral and burial practices, which appear to be very foreign to the Arab chronicler. Overall, the account elucidates the differences between the two cultures. It must have been a culture shock for Ibn Fadlan to experience Viking *Rus*’ life, however his report also provides invaluable information about the interaction between the two cultures outside the commercial trade exchange. Subsequent Arab reports on the Vikings corroborate Ibn Fadlan’s observations, indicating a long lasting and extensive interaction between the two peoples.

What is missing in the Viking-Arab trade exchange discussion is evidence of written Viking sources describing the contact and interaction between the two peoples. There are no Viking accounts available similar to Ibn Fadlan’s report on the *Rus*’ that could provide insight to how the Vikings perceived the Arabs and their

customs. There is however evidence of long-distance travel and trade on memorial stones or rune stones, with the majority of them occurring in Sweden. The inscriptions tell of travels to Greece to obtain precious metals, as well as travels to the Middle East, mentioning Jerusalem and the land of the Saracens.²⁴ Equally missing from the discussion are Viking artifacts in Arab lands, which would indicate a one-sided trade exchange. However, through Arab written sources it is clear that goods such as furs and weapons were highly sought after by the Arabs. A lack of archaeological evidence does not automatically preclude the existence of trade relations. There is, however a plethora of Arabic and Islamic artifacts in Scandinavia, especially in Sweden. This in turn supports the idea that Swedish Vikings traveled eastwards, established settlements in the Volga region of Russia, and engaged in an extensive trading network with the Arabs via Byzantium. This eastward exploration was spurred by the Vikings' quest for silver. As Wladyslaw Duczko states, "For the Northmen the Islamic silver was the main object of exchange. It was in exchange of this metal that a variety of goods was delivered to the East."²⁵ In return, the Vikings acquired a rich selection of diverse goods from the East that they brought back to their respective settlements in Russia as well as Scandinavia.

The great majority of Arabic and Islamic artifacts found in Scandinavia were silver coins. Scandinavia was not a silver-producing region, thus devoid of natural occurrences of the precious metal. In Sweden alone, 80,000 dirhams have been found, with the great majority of them dating to the ninth and tenth century, indicating the intensity of the long-distance trade exchange during the *Rus'* first contact with Byzantium.²⁶ These silver coin hoards also show how important the precious metal was to Swedish society in particular. The chieftains were "in constant need of silver to maintain their societal position," which meant that "silver was very useful as an economical-political means and was a significant factor in the shaping of the emerging Swedish state."²⁷ Thus, the importance of the silver coin hoards cannot be underestimated. The coveted silver coins were used to ensure chieftains' political power and influence. Gift giving in general was an important practice in Viking society, as chieftains and men of high social standing used the custom to secure and expand their political position in exchange for loyalty and support.

The practice of gift giving was not limited to silver coins. As the Sagas report, exotic items from foreign lands were greatly desired, and used to enhance a

person's status or ensure allegiance for a leader. These exotic items are further proof of an extensive long-distance relationship with Byzantium. Snorri Sturluson mentions how "unusual splendour and foreign customs and fashions" were a regular sight at the Norwegian kings' court.²⁸ While Arabic and Islamic silver coins represent the majority of artifacts in Sweden that indicate an extensive trade relationship with the Arab world, other items point to the rich diversity of the trade exchange. Although silver was in high demand in Scandinavia, more personal Arabic objects have been found, including a bronze incense burner, an oil lamp, fine glassware, silk textiles, as well as intact pieces of oriental jewelry, such as a silver amethyst ring with the Arabic inscription *in the name of Allah*.²⁹

Evidence in written Arabic sources, Viking Sagas, as well as archeological artifacts in Scandinavia point to an extensive trade relationship between Vikings and Arabs. The Vikings' need for silver spurred their exploration eastward, and established a far-reaching trade exchange that went beyond their quest for the precious metal. The Vikings' development from raiders to traders can be traced in this long-distance trade relationship. In their quest for silver, the Vikings eventually reached the great trading center of Constantinople, bringing them in contact with diverse cultures. This in turn started a far-reaching trade exchange that impacted not only the lives of the Viking merchants but also brought the exotic world of Byzantium and Muslim Arabs to the "people of the North."

Notes

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2. Else Roesdahl and Anne Kromann, "The Vikings and the Islamic lands," in *The Arabian Journey: Danish Connections with the Islamic World over a Thousand Years*, ed. Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk, Peder Mortensen (Århus: Prehistoric Museum Moesgård, 1996), 12.
3. Price, "The Vikings in Spain, North Africa and the Mediterranean," 466.
4. Amira K. Bennison, "The Peoples of the North in the Eyes of the Muslims of Umayyad al-Andalus (711-1031)," *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 2 (Jul 2007): 171.
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10. Elisabeth Piltz, "Varangian Companies for Long Distance Trade," in *Byzantium and Islam in Scandinavia*, ed. Elisabeth Piltz (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1998), 99.
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15. H. R. Ellis Davidson, *The Viking Road to Byzantium*, 227.
16. Gotthard Strohmaier, "Arabische Autoren des Mittelalters über die Nordvölker," in *Byzantium and Islam in Scandinavia*, ed. Elisabeth Piltz, trans. Susanne Watts (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1998), 59-60.
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19. Bernard Lewis, "The Muslim Discovery of Europe," 409-411.
20. J. E. Montgomery, "Arabic Sources on the Vikings," in *The Viking World*, ed. Stefan Brink in collaboration with Neil Price (London: Routledge, 2012), 552.
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26. Elisabeth Piltz, "Byzantium and Islam in Scandinavia," in *Byzantium and Islam in Scandinavia*, ed. Elisabeth Piltz (Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag, 1998), 29.
27. Wladyslaw Duczko, "Viking Age Scandinavia and Islam," 107.



The recipe for "small beer" includes molasses as a sweetener and instructions on what to do if the weather is very cold

By Marissa Fessenden
smithsonian.com
November 25, 2015

The enthusiasm surrounding craft beer these days has some breweries putting odd ingredients in their batches, from beard yeast to oysters. Innovation can be exciting, but it inevitably comes with the backlash to seek something authentic. Breweries seeking to go old school might take note: There's a recipe out there for a very authentic ale brewed and enjoyed by none other than George Washington himself.

The recipe is penned in Washington's notebook, kept during the French and Indian War, writes Hillary Brady for the *Digital Public Library of America*. The original notebook rests in the collections of The New York Public Library and details the 25-year-old Washington's daily life as a colonel in the Virginia Regiment militia. The pages include lists of supplies, "sundry things to be done in Williamsburg," outlines for memos and letters, and on the final page, a recipe for "small beer."

The term "small beer" refers to lower-quality, lower-alcohol content brews typically drunk by paid servants. Soldiers in the British Army probably also enjoyed small beer. The recipe is simple, as Brady transcribes it:

Take a large Sifter full of Bran Hops to your Taste — Boil these 3 hours. Then strain out 30 Gall. into a Cooler put in 3 Gallons Molasses while the Beer is scalding hot or rather drain the molasses into the Cooler. Strain the Beer on it while boiling hot let this stand til it is little more than Blood warm. Then put in a quart of Yeast if the weather is very cold cover it over with a Blanket. Let it work in the Cooler 24 hours then put it into the Cask. leave the Bung open til it is almost done working — Bottle it that day Week it was Brewed.

Washington wasn't the only founding father with a penchant for brewing his brew. Thomas Jefferson joined his wife Martha in making home brews and bottled his first batch at Monticello in 1812, after his presidency, reports "Chris" at *Draft*. James Madison may or may not have considered a national brewery, based on a proposition in a letter he received from an entrepreneurial businessman. And Benjamin Franklin's recipe for making spruce beer, writes Lisa Grimm for *Serious Eats*, has inspired modern imitations.

Though there was the brief period in U.S. history in which all alcohol was frowned upon (i.e., Prohibition), it seems that imbibing is certainly one of America's longer-lived pastimes.

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Outrage as it emerges Germany still pays out to Spain's Nazi volunteers

thelocal.es

Fiona Govan · 5 Nov 2015, 13:00

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Berlin is still honouring an agreement struck by dictator Francisco Franco to pay pensions to fascist volunteers who signed up to fight for Hitler, it has emerged.

Around €100,000 (\$109,000) of German tax-payers' money is paid to former combatants, their widows and orphans each year, according to left-wing political party Die Linke, who tabled a question in the Bundestag, Germany's national parliament.

"It's an absolute disgrace to think the German government is still paying out to Nazi volunteers," MP Jon Iñarritu of the left-wing Basque party Amairu, told The Local.

"It doesn't make sense, contravenes EU law and serves to humiliate victims of fascism," he said.

"It was my understanding that Germany had a completely different attitude when it came to historical memory and the rejection of fascism."

More than 47,000 Spaniards signed up to the Division Azul - Blue Division - to join Nazi troops fighting communism on Germany's eastern front between 1941 and 1944.

A pension agreement was struck by General Franco with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1962 that saw the Blue Division combatants, their widows and orphans receive a pension from the state.

Picasso's Guernica hangs in Madrid's Reina Sofia Museum. Photo: AFP

In return, Spain agreed to pay a stipend to the widows of fallen airmen of Hitler's Condor Legion, who bombed Spain during the Civil War of 1936 and 1939 and most famously carried out the bombardment of the Basque town Guernica.

But Die Linke questioned whether it was appropriate for Germany to still be paying out to the Division Azul. Last year the figure amounted to €107, 352 split between 41 veterans, eight widows and an orphan.

"It's a scandal that nearly 70 years after the war ended Germany continues to pay more than €100,000 per year to Nazi collaborators," said Andrej Hunko of Die Linke, reported the Basque newspaper Gara.

"These people voluntarily joined the German fascists in a war of extermination in Eastern Europe and it is incomprehensible that the German government continues these payments while so many war victims are still waiting for their rightful compensation," the German MP said.

The Basque pro-independence coalition party EH Bildu said they will bring up the issue at European Parliament on Friday.

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In 1848, the importation of camels for military purposes in the southwest was suggested to the War Department by Henry Wayne, a Quartermaster Major. Two years later, Secretary of War and Mississippi Senator, Jefferson Davis, tried to persuade the Senate to look into the use of camels for the U.S. Army.

During this time period, the southwest territory of the United States was greatly expanding and it was thought that camels could be used to carry at least twice the amount of weight as horses or mules, and might also be used in tracking and pursuing Indians, as they could travel without water or rest for much longer than horses. It was also suggested that the camels might carry the mail and that fast camel passenger trains might be developed to run from Missouri River points to the Pacific Coast.

Initially, the Senators voted the idea down, but after California newspapers began to promote the idea, they finally agreed in 1854, passing a bill to appropriate \$30,000 for the camel experiment.

Some 72 camels arrived in the country in the early part of 1857 and were put to work carrying supplies in the southwest. However, though the camels proved to be well-suited to travel through the region, their unpleasant disposition, habit of frightening horse, and tendency to wander off during the nights, made them very unpopular among the soldiers. Still, they continued to be used until the Civil War broke out, at which time; they were sold at auction or turned loose into the desert.

For years afterwards, wild camels continued to be spied roaming in the desert, especially in southern Arizona. Along with these real sightings, a number of legends and tales began regarding these ugly beasts of burden. The most popular is the tale of a camel known as the Red Ghost.

In 1883, a woman was found trampled to death and, on her body and a nearby bush, were clumps of reddish fur. Large hoof prints were found in the area, but locals were perplexed. A short time later, a large animal careened into a tent in which two miners lay sleeping. Though they were unable to identify the beast, again, large hoof prints and tufts of red hair were left behind. After more incidents occurred, the locals finally recognized the large animal as a camel. Soon, people began to report seeing the camel, who one rancher said carried a rider, though the rider appeared to be dead. The next report came from a group of prospectors who saw the camel and while watching him, spied something falling from its back. As the beast moved on, the prospectors went to see what had fallen and discovered a human skull. For the next several years, numerous others spied the camel, who by this time had been dubbed the "Red Ghost," carrying its headless rider. However, in 1893, when an Arizona farmer found the red camel grazing in his garden, he shot and killed the beast. By this time, the large camel had shaken free of its dead rider, but still bore the saddle and leather straps with which the corpse had been attached.

There was much speculation as to who the mysterious dead rider the camel had carried for several years might have been. One tale alleges that the rider was a young soldier, who was afraid of the camels, and therefore, was having much difficulty in learning how to ride them. In order to teach him how, his fellow soldiers tied him to the top of the beast, determined that he would get over his fear. They then hit the camel on the rump and the beast took off running. Though the soldiers pursued the camel and his rider, the red beast easily outpaced them and escaped into the desert. Neither the camel, nor his helpless rider, were ever seen again.

Though the abandoned beasts of the Camel Corps roamed for decades, they soon disappeared

altogether. In 1907, a prospector reported that he had seen two wild camels in Nevada and other reports continued to come in sporadically. However, in April, 1934, the *Oakland Tribune* reported: "The Last American Camel Is Dead." The camel, dubbed "Topsy," was last seen trekking across the desert of Arizona into California. When she made her way to Los Angeles, she was taken to Griffith Park to live. However, sometime later, she became so crippled with the paralysis, the zoo attendants were forced to put her down.

Seemingly, all the "real" army camels have long passed. However, legends continue to abound of people sighting a giant red camel, carrying a headless rider, in the deserts of Arizona. It sounds as if "Red Ghost," may very well be living up to his name.

Yet another legend of a ghostly camel also persists. This camel belonged to a prospector named Jake, who had purchased three camels from the Army at the public auction. Though his camels were every bit as ornery as the soldiers had described them, he spent much time caring for them and had nothing but praise for his beasts of burden.

After Jake hit pay dirt, he led his gold-laden camels into town to sell his ore. Afterwards, he headed to the local saloon to celebrate. Unfortunately, in the crowd was a man named Paul Adams, who listened with much interest to Jake's story of his gold find. When Jake left to return to his mine, he didn't go directly to his claim, knowing that he might be followed. Though he was careful and took a circuitous route, the man named Paul Adams followed him. When Jake encamped for the night, Adams, thinking that he was at the mine's location, murdered him. Trying to protect his owner, one of the camels attacked Adams, and for his efforts, was shot by scoundrel, but not before he had viciously bit him.

Adams then began to search in earnest for Jake's mine, until one night the ghost of Jake riding upon the dead camel, approached his camp and chased the scoundrel all the way into town, straight to the sheriff's office. Frightened beyond belief, Paul Adams then made a full confession.

Whether Jake and his loyal camel continue to roam the desert is unknown.

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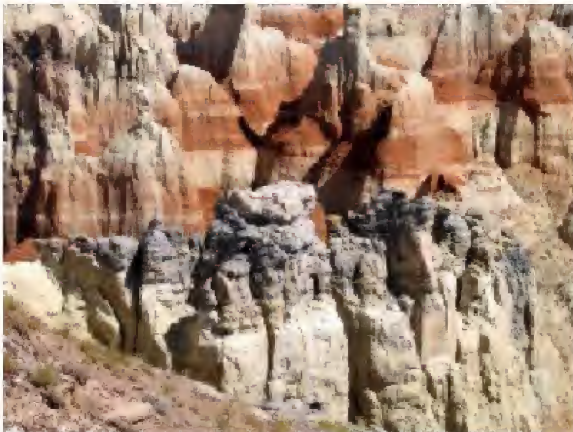
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Ghost Stories and Mysteries of Coal Mine Canyon arizonaaddities.com

March 18, 2010 By Sam Lowe

Coal Mine Canyon is one of Arizona's lesser-known treasures because it's easy to miss. And, perhaps, because of the ghosts.

There are no signs pointing to the canyon; the only markers are a windmill and watering tank on the side of the road southeast of Tuba City. But those who find it will be entranced by the multicolored hoodoos that rise sharply from the floor of the canyon to create a many-hued splash in an otherwise dull brown flatland. The hoodoos, shaped like those in Utah's Bryce Canyon, are the result of underground fires and eons of erosion. They and the sidewalls of the canyon are colored in different layers. The black layer just below the rim is a seam of coal; the others are probably the result of combustion that caused some of the coal layers to burn so intensely that the shale turned red.



14 coal

Overnight camping is allowed at the site but those who plan to stay after dark should know about the ghost stories told by both Native Americans and Anglos. They claim that on certain nights, when the moonlight dances across the hoodoos, a white mist rises from the bottom of the canyon and forms the shape of a beautiful young woman. The stories say the apparition is that of a young Navajo wife who once walked along the rim of the canyon with her husband and small child, who both fell to

their deaths. The grief-stricken wife returned to the spot every night until she died, and now her ghost returns when the moon is full.

Miners have also reported they hear "knocking sounds" after dark.

Another bit of folklore deals with the Eagle Woman who fell into the canyon and was buried there, but climbed out of her grave and now appears occasionally to frolic in the moonlight. Others believe the ghost is Masaw, an omen of death.



03 coal

Coal Mine Canyon is located 16 miles southeast of Tuba City along Highway 264, between mileposts 336 and 337. Turn off at the windmill on the north side, cross a cattle guard and take the dirt road past the windmill for about a quarter-mile. Park, walk through an opening in a small fence and enjoy the view.

But if you go there at night, well...

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Ghost Streets of Los Angeles

blogspot.com

December 03, 2015



[Image: Via Google Maps].

In a short story called "Reports of Certain Events in London" by China Miéville—a text often cited here on BLDGBLOG—we read about a spectral network of streets that appear and disappear around London like the static of a radio tuned between stations, old roadways that are neither here nor there, flickering on and off in the

dead hours of the night.

For reasons mostly related to a bank heist described in my book, *A Burglar's Guide to the City*, I found myself looking at a lot of aerial shots of Los Angeles—specifically the area between West Hollywood and Sunset Boulevard—when I noticed this weird diagonal line cutting through the neighborhood.



[Image: Via Google Maps].

It is not a street—although it obviously started off as a street. In fact, parts of it today are still called Marshfield Way.

At times, however, it's just an alleyway behind other buildings, or even just a narrow parking lot tucked in at

the edge of someone else's property line.

[Image: Via Google Maps].

Other times, it actually takes on solidity and mass in the form of oddly skewed, diagonal

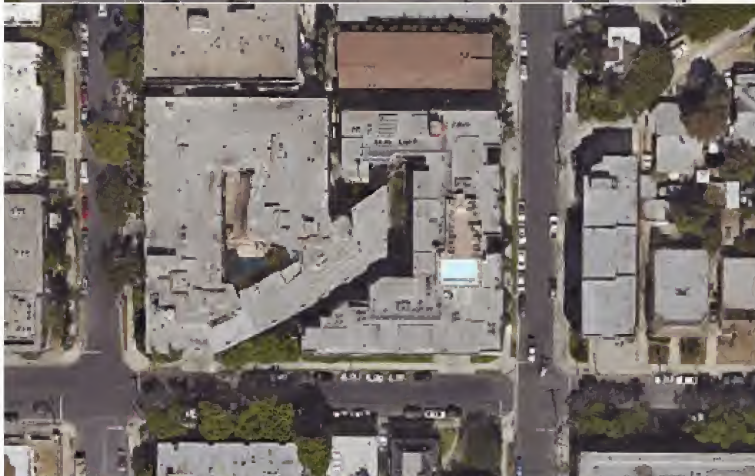


slashes of houses.

The buildings that fill it look more like scar tissue, bubbling up to cover a void left behind by something else's absence.

[Image: Via Google Maps].

First of all, I love the idea that the buildings seen here take their form from a lost street—that an old throughway since scrubbed from the surface of Los Angeles has reappeared in the form of contemporary architectural space.



That is, someone's living room is actually shaped the way it is not because of something peculiar to architectural history, but because of a ghost street, or the wall of perhaps your very own bedroom takes its angle from a right of way that, for whatever reason, long ago disappeared.

[Image: Via Google Maps].

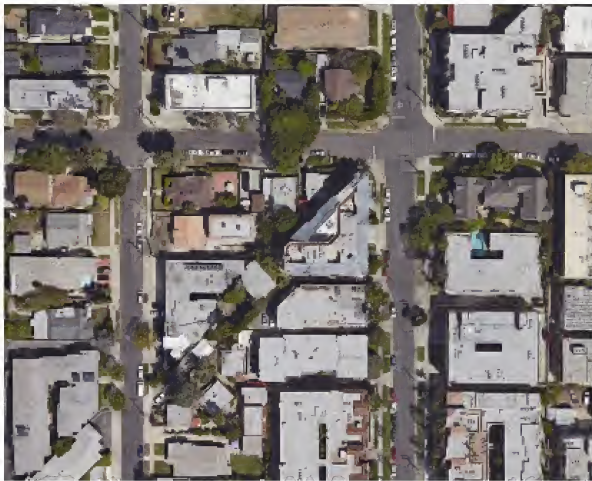


If you follow this thing from roughly the intersection of Hollywood & La Brea to the strangely cleaved back of an apartment building on Ogden Drive—the void left by this lost street, incredibly, now takes on the form of a private swimming pool—these buildings seem to plow through the neighborhood like train cars.

Which could also be quite appropriate, as this superficial wound on the skin of the city is

most likely a former streetcar route.

But who knows: my own research went no deeper than an abandoned Google search, and I was actually more curious what other people thought this might be or what they've experienced here, assuming at least someone in the world reading this post someday might live or work in one of these buildings.



[Image: Via Google Maps].

And perhaps this is just the exact same point, repeated, but the notion that every city has these deeper wounds and removals that nonetheless never disappear is just incredible to me. You cut something out—and it becomes a building a generation later. You remove an entire street—and it becomes someone's living room.

I remember first learning that one of the auditoriums at the Barbican Art Centre in London is shaped the way it is because it was built inside a former WWII bomb crater, and simply reeling at the notion that all of these negative spaces left scattered and invisible around the city could take on architectural form.

Like ghosts appearing out of nowhere—or like China Miéville's fluttering half-streets, conjured out of the urban injuries we all live within and too easily mistake for property lines and real estate, amidst architectural incisions that someday become swimming pools and parking lots.

18 comments:



1. Charles Edward Rogers December 03, 2015 10:31 PM

<http://onlyinhollywood.org/ever-wondered-theres-triangle-la-brea-end-hollywood-boulevard/>

ReplyDelete



2. Stanley Greenberg December 03, 2015 11:05 PM

Great post. Here are three from New York, a former street, former rail line and former aqueduct.

ReplyDelete



3. Andy Jukes December 04, 2015 12:22 AM

This is one in Vancouver, BC. Used to be rail line. There's a former roundhouse, now a community centre, about a kilometer west but I'm not sure if they share a history.

49°16'54.22" N 123°06'14.47" W

ReplyDelete



4. Anonymous December 04, 2015 9:50 AM

That right of way is not actually a ghost street: it used to be the train to Santa Monica. The old Red Car line ran on Hollywood Blvd and then cut diagonally across the street grid to reach Santa Monica Blvd.

ReplyDelete

Replies



• AnneDecember 04, 2015 12:52 PM

What Anonymous said...

Delete

Reply



5. Brian SimsDecember 04, 2015 9:55 AM

My immediate reaction is these streets follow old mission boundaries. If that is the case these occurrences happen all over Southern California.

I fellow grad student from my time in the Geography Department at CSU Long Beach did his master's thesis on this topic. His work won the university's thesis of the year. I'm sure the thesis can be looked up online.

ReplyDelete



6. brady westwaterDecember 04, 2015 11:00 AM

The coolest diagonal street was creating by stagecoaches racing each other from San Pedro to the hotel on 1850's - and on - hotels on Main Street. Former Weller Street - which is now named after a Japanese-American astronaut.

ReplyDelete



7. Jesse CrawfordDecember 04, 2015 11:31 AM

You can clearly see this kind of cut in Fremont, CA where a part of the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct passes underground.

My understanding is that they were forced to purchase all of the land above the excavation work, and because of the odd shape it's rather difficult to sell now.

ReplyDelete



8. kees volharderDecember 04, 2015 12:22 PM

Former railway tracks? Would explain the typical curve as well

ReplyDelete



9. Jane KilcullenDecember 04, 2015 12:54 PM

<http://www.uncanny.net/~wetzels/hollytopo.JPG>

Here's a map of the PE rail line that traveled southwest on Marshfield Way starting at Hollywood & La Brea.

ReplyDelete



10. SarahDecember 04, 2015 1:18 PM

Definitely railroad tracks. The curve gives it away. We have it here in SF as well, through the Mission and Noe Valley, particularly in the park known as Juri Commons. It's actually more evident on the ground because there is a diagonal stripe of midcentury houses among Victorians that were built after the tracks were dismantled. I wonder sometimes what's in some of those back yards . . .

Interesting article about it: <http://burritojustice.com/2014/01/22/dolores-st-bridge/>

ReplyDelete



11. AnonymousDecember 04, 2015 2:03 PM

In the late 1970s, I lived in a Hollywood house (later razed for a big apartment building) on North Martel at the corner of Hawthorne. The diagonal ran right next the house, and yes, it was a remnant of the old Pacific Electric railway. There was still a piece of track there. I loved seeing it -- having that connection to LA history, and since the house was an older one, imagining earlier residents sitting on the front porch and watching the cars go by.

ReplyDelete

Replies



• UnknownDecember 04, 2015 7:02 PM

totally.

Delete

Reply



12. Leo BraudyDecember 04, 2015 2:24 PM

The art historian Joseph Connors has done an analysis of several streets in Rome that describes similarly ghostly (and legally-derived) reasons for why buildings are shaped the way they are, why some jut out over the sidewalk and others are set back, etc.

ReplyDelete



13. Glen CreasonDecember 04, 2015 4:58 PM

anonymous is right...the Sanborn Fire Insurance atlas volume 10 for LA done in 1919 shows it as Pacific Electric right of way on sheets 1042, 1043, 1044

ReplyDelete



14. UnknownDecember 04, 2015 6:46 PM

When I lived nearby, I was in love with this old car route.

ReplyDelete



15. UnknownDecember 04, 2015 9:01 PM

Yes! I used to live in Hayes Valley, San Francisco near the end of the old Central

Freeway. They are just now building apartments in the diagonal gap left by the freeway:
<https://goo.gl/maps/DrbjSCNT5X42>

Also, I learned today about Amon Carter/Greater Southwest Airport in Dallas/Fort Worth, TX where the runway was turned in to a road. You can still see the imprints from the taxiways and terminal roads 40 years after it closed:
<https://goo.gl/maps/wEU9XxBfui82>

ReplyDelete



16. Anonymous December 04, 2015 9:15 PM

Here's a block in the Pico-Robertson area. I lived there as a teenager, but never noticed the two diagonals until I looked at it with google maps. There are some lots on the west side of the next two blocks north which also have diagonals. And if you continue north across Pico Blvd, you can see diagonal property lines around St. Mary Magdalene Catholic School and the church.

ReplyDelete

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September 27, 2014

Most photos of little girls or other figures captured on trail camera (so they say) are fake. They are photoshopped or otherwise manipulated, often created with use of a ghost app on a phone. But the latest one, making the rounds on paranormal and mystery mongering feeds on Facebook, looks shocking, creepy, sparking speculation as to its authenticity. But it is ABSOLUTELY REAL- fascinating and beautiful.



standing deer

Very spooky – what is she doing there? Why aren't the deer running away. Is it a ghost? Is it a child lost in the woods?

It's a piece of art, actually, done by composer and photographer William Harper. The original photo is here from a series called "Following the deer"). You can also see the sequence.

Amazing. The description of the series on his website explains that the camera is hidden, attached to a tree, and the scene is set.

A runaway child slips into the glade and joins the animals. She wants to have the coyote for her own. The coyote will stay

with the runaway but won't get too close. The photographer, tracking his discoveries, will drive the animals into hiding but will take a fine portrait.

Some of the stories the photographer tells are true. Some are outright lies. He explains to the children that photographs don't lie but he doesn't need to; the children can tell when a lie is true and, in any case, are somewhat flexible on the



Screen Shot 2014-09-27 at 4.19.42 PM

issue.

Searching for the photo will take to you Harper's website.

This is a good example of why we should not jump to ANY conclusions, paranormal or fake. We can never conceive of all the possible explanations (so you should never jump to paranormal when you can't exhaust the normal). I suppose this isn't "normal" or natural. It's completely contrived. The reaction of social media and forums and paranormal sites reveals how we love these spooky, mysterious puzzles.

Tip: Tkay Anderson

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idoubtit

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Tags:

10 comments for “Ghost-like little girl with deer – some fake, some real”

1. Bill T.

September 27, 2014 at 4:54 PM

I have no expertise in graphics, I can barely operate a camera, I don't understand how these shots could have been created (any non-supernatural explanation by the authors I throw away as deliberate prevarication) therefore I conclude that the enclosed are positive proof of spooks.

• Dubious f

September 27, 2014 at 8:42 PM

Poor bill! Photos started in 1826....188 years ago, you like people I know saying "I'm not to comfortable with computer either and this new technology..." Personal Computers have now been around for 40 years... Put them together, and you have kodak's demise. Pun aside, this is not material to debate. Ghost.... C'mon, see the double 1826 exposure!

■ Bill T.

September 28, 2014 at 6:40 PM

What? You don't believe that my complete lack of knowledge about video editing doesn't make me vastly qualified to weigh in on these? What if I said "quantum", would that help remove your doubt?

2. Keith

September 27, 2014 at 5:42 PM

If no one lied, if everyone told the truth and if no one wanted notoriety or monetary gain. i could take this serious.

3. One Eyed Jack

September 27, 2014 at 9:25 PM

I really don't understand what the hype is about. Domesticated deer and fox are quite common. It is a simple thing to set up a trail camera with a child and some of these animals. Just because it was shot with a trial camera doesn't mean the animals were wild.

There is nothing paranormal or even strange here. My mother has pictures of me feeding deer by hand when I was 4 or 5 years old. Around the age of 10 I "tamed" a wild racoon by tempting it with pears from our trees. For an entire summer, it followed me around like a dog.

• idoubtit

September 28, 2014 at 10:41 AM

People in general seem very disconnected with nature these days. They are flummoxed by things that are in their backyard.

4. Moo

September 28, 2014 at 8:35 AM

They could all have been made fairly easily by just combining together photos of humans and animals. There being a colour photo of the girl and very "wrong"-looking deer here <http://wharperphoto.com/zoom/1400x720/2669703.html> supports this.

5. spookyparadigm

September 28, 2014 at 3:56 PM

"Some of the stories the photographer tells are true. Some are outright lies. He explains to the children that photographs don't lie but he doesn't need to; the children can tell when a lie is true and, in any case, are somewhat flexible on the issue."

I'm sure I've posted this here before, but

6. Mike C.

September 30, 2014 at 8:25 AM

She doesn't look any more "ghost-like" than the deer.

7. Tim

November 18, 2014 at 9:43 AM

Nothing strange here, but still put together quite nicely.

Comments are closed.

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A fox dressed as a monk. Yoshitoshi Tsukioka, "One Hundred Aspects of the Moon: The Cry of the Fox"

Main : Japanese : Folktales

Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan: Kitsune

Lafcadio Hearn's accounts of his travels through Japan contain dozens of scattered references to kitsune, plus an entire chapter devoted to them. This is that chapter. If you would like to read the rest of the book, it's here.

1

By every shady wayside and in every ancient grove, on almost every hilltop and in the outskirts of every village, you may see, while travelling through the Hondo country, some little Shinto shrine, before which, or at either side of which, are images of seated foxes in stone. Usually there is a pair of these, facing each other. But there may be a dozen, or a score, or several hundred, in which case most of the images are very small. And in more than one of the larger towns you may see in the court of some great miya a countless host of stone foxes, of all dimensions, from toy-figures but a few inches high to the colossi whose pedestals tower above your head, all squatting around the temple in tiered ranks of thousands. Such shrines and temples, everybody knows, are dedicated to Inari the God of Rice. After having travelled much in Japan, you will find that whenever you try to recall any country-place you have visited, there will appear in some nook or corner of that remembrance a pair of green-and-grey foxes of stone, with broken noses. In my own memories of Japanese travel, these shapes have become de rigueur, as picturesque detail.

In the neighbourhood of the capital and in Tokyo itself—sometimes in the cemeteries—very beautiful idealised figures of foxes may be seen, elegant as greyhounds. They have long green or grey eyes of crystal quartz or some other diaphanous substance; and they create a strong impression as mythological conceptions. But throughout the interior, fox-images are much less artistically fashioned. In Izumo, particularly, such stone-carving has a decidedly primitive appearance. There is an astonishing multiplicity and variety of fox-images in the Province of the Gods—images comical, quaint, grotesque, or monstrous, but, for the most part, very rudely chiselled. I cannot, however, declare them less interesting on that account. The work of the Tokkaido sculptor copies the conventional artistic notion of light grace and ghostliness. The rustic foxes of Izumo have no grace: they are uncouth; but they betray in countless queer ways the personal fancies of their makers. They are of many moods—whimsical, apathetic, inquisitive, saturnine, jocose, ironical; they watch and snooze and squint and wink and sneer; they wait with lurking smiles; they listen with cocked ears most stealthily, keeping their mouths open or closed. There is an amusing individuality about them all, and an air of knowing mockery about most of them, even those whose noses have been broken off. Moreover, these ancient country foxes have certain natural beauties which their modern Tokyo kindred cannot show. Time has bestowed upon them divers speckled coats of beautiful soft colours while they have been sitting on their pedestals, listening to the ebbing and

purchaser is most great in the case of land terraced for rice-fields, in the mountain districts. The prime necessity of such agriculture is irrigation— irrigation by a hundred ingenious devices, always in the face of difficulties. There are seasons when water becomes terribly scarce, and when the peasants will even fight for water. It is feared that on lands haunted by foxes, the foxes may turn the water away from one field into another, or, for spite, make holes in the dikes and so destroy the crop.

There are not wanting shrewd men to take advantage of this queer belief. One gentleman of Matsue, a good agriculturist of the modern school, speculated in the fox-terror fifteen years ago, and purchased a vast tract of land in eastern Izumo which no one else would bid for. That land has sextupled in value, besides yielding generously under his system of cultivation; and by selling it now he could realise an immense fortune. His success, and the fact of his having been an official of the government, broke the spell: it is no longer believed that his farms are fox-haunted. But success alone could not have freed the soil from the curse of the superstition. The power of the farmer to banish the foxes was due to his official character. With the peasantry, the word "Government" is talismanic.

Indeed, the richest and the most successful farmer of Izumo, worth more than a hundred thousand yen—Wakuri-San of Chinomiya in Kandegori—is almost universally believed by the peasantry to be a kitsune-mochi. They tell curious stories about him. Some say that when a very poor man he found in the woods one day a little white fox-cub, and took it home, and petted it, and gave it plenty of tofu, azukimeshi, and aburage—three sorts of food which foxes love—and that from that day prosperity came to him. Others say that in his house there is a special zashiki, or guest-room for foxes; and that there, once in each month, a great banquet is given to hundreds of Hito-kitsune. But Chinomiya-no-Wakuri, as they call him, can afford to laugh at all these tales. He is a refined man, highly respected in cultivated circles where superstition never enters

10

When a Ninko comes to your house at night and knocks, there is a peculiar muffled sound about the knocking by which you can tell that the visitor is a fox—if you have experienced ears. For a fox knocks at doors with its tail. If you open, then you will see a man, or perhaps a beautiful girl, who will talk to you only in fragments of words, but nevertheless in such a way that you can perfectly well understand. A fox cannot pronounce a whole word, but a part only—as "Nish . . . Sa. . ." for "Nishida-San"; "degoz . . ." for "degozarimasu, or "uch . . . de . . ." for "uchi desuka?" Then, if you are a friend of foxes, the visitor will present you with a little gift of some sort, and at once vanish away into the darkness. Whatever the gift may be, it will seem much larger that night than in the morning. Only a part of a fox-gift is real.

A Matsue shizoku, going home one night by way of the street called Horomachi, saw a fox running for its life pursued by dogs. He beat the dogs off with his umbrella, thus giving the fox a chance to escape. On the following evening he heard some one knock at his door, and on opening the to saw a very pretty girl standing there, who said to him: "Last night I should have died but for your august kindness. I know not how to thank you enough: this is only a pitiable little present. And she laid a small bundle at his feet and went away. He opened the bundle

and found two beautiful ducks and two pieces of silver money—those long, heavy, leaf-shaped pieces of money—each worth ten or twelve dollars— such as are now eagerly sought for by collectors of antique things. After a little while, one of the coins changed before his eyes into a piece of grass; the other was always good.

Sugitean-San, a physician of Matsue, was called one evening to attend a case of confinement at a house some distance from the city, on the hill called Shiragayama. He was guided by a servant carrying a paper lantern painted with an aristocratic crest. [13] He entered into a magnificent house, where he was received with superb samurai courtesy. The mother was safely delivered of a fine boy. The family treated the physician to an excellent dinner, entertained him elegantly, and sent him home, loaded with presents and money. Next day he went, according to Japanese etiquette, to return thanks to his hosts. He could not find the house: there was, in fact, nothing on Shiragayama except forest. Returning home, he examined again the gold which had been paid to him. All was good except one piece, which had changed into grass.

11

Curious advantages have been taken of the superstitions relating to the Fox-God.

In Matsue, several years ago, there was a tofuya which enjoyed an unusually large patronage. A tofuya is a shop where tofu is sold—a curd prepared from beans, and much resembling good custard in appearance. Of all eatable things, foxes are most fond of tofu and of soba, which is a preparation of buckwheat. There is even a legend that a fox, in the semblance of an elegantly attired man, once visited Nogi-no-Kuriharaya, a popular sobaya on the lake shore, and ate much soba. But after the guest was gone, the money he had paid changed into wooden shavings.

The proprietor of the tofuya had a different experience. A man in wretched attire used to come to his shop every evening to buy a cho of tofu, which he devoured on the spot with the haste of one long famished. Every evening for weeks he came, and never spoke; but the landlord saw one evening the tip of a bushy white tail protruding from beneath the stranger's rags. The sight aroused strange surmises and weird hopes. From that night he began to treat the mysterious visitor with obsequious kindness. But another month passed before the latter spoke. Then what he said was about as follows:

"Though I seem to you a man, I am not a man; and I took upon myself human form only for the purpose of visiting you. I come from Taka-machi, where my temple is, at which you often visit. And being desirous to reward your piety and goodness of heart, I have come to-night to save you from a great danger. For by the power which I possess I know that tomorrow this street will burn, and all the houses in it shall be utterly destroyed except yours. To save it I am going to make a charm. But in order that I may do this, you must open your go-down (kura) that I may enter, and allow no one to watch me; for should living eye look upon me there, the charm will not avail."

The shopkeeper, with fervent words of gratitude, opened his storehouse, and reverently admitted the seeming Inari and gave orders that none of his household or servants should

keep watch. And these orders were so well obeyed that all the stores within the storehouse, and all the valuables of the family, were removed without hindrance during the night. Next day the kura was found to be empty. And there was no fire.

There is also a well-authenticated story about another wealthy shopkeeper of Matsue who easily became the prey of another pretended Inari. This Inari told him that whatever sum of money he should leave at a certain miya by night, he would find it doubled in the morning—as the reward of his lifelong piety. The shopkeeper carried several small sums to the miya, and found them doubled within twelve hours. Then he deposited larger sums, which were similarly multiplied; he even risked some hundreds of dollars, which were duplicated. Finally he took all his money out of the bank and placed it one evening within the shrine of the god—and never saw it again.

12

Vast is the literature of the subject of foxes—ghostly foxes. Some of it is old as the eleventh century. In the ancient romances and the modern cheap novel, in historical traditions and in popular fairy-tales, foxes perform wonderful parts. There are very beautiful and very sad and very terrible stories about foxes. There are legends of foxes discussed by great scholars, and legends of foxes known to every child in Japan—such as the history of Tamamonomae, the beautiful favourite of the Emperor Toba—Tamamonomae, whose name has passed into a proverb, and who proved at last to be only a demon fox with Nine Tails and Fur of Gold. But the most interesting part of fox-literature belongs to the Japanese stage, where the popular beliefs are often most humorously reflected—as in the following excerpts from the comedy of Hiza-Kuruge, written by one Jippensha Ikku:

[Kidahachi and Iyaji are travelling from Yedo to Osaka. When within a short distance of Akasaka, Kidahachi hastens on in advance to secure good accommodations at the best inn. Iyaji, travelling along leisurely, stops a little while at a small wayside refreshment-house kept by an old woman]

OLD WOMAN.—Please take some tea, sir.

IYAJI.—Thank you! How far is it from here to the next town?—Akasaka?

OLD WOMAN.—About one ri. But if you have no companion, you had better remain here to-night, because there is a bad fox on the way, who bewitches travellers.

IYAJI.—I am afraid of that sort of thing. But I must go on; for my companion has gone on ahead of me, and will be waiting for me.

[After having paid for his refreshments, Iyaji proceeds on his way. The night is very dark, and he feels quite nervous on account of what the old woman has told him. After having walked a considerable distance, he suddenly hears a fox yelping—kon-kon. Feeling still more afraid, he shouts at the top of his voice:—]

IYAJI.—Come near me, and I will kill you!

[Meanwhile Kidahachi, who has also been frightened by the old woman's stories, and has therefore determined to wait for Iyaji, is saying to himself in the dark: "If I do not wait for him,

we shall certainly be deluded." Suddenly he hears Iyaji's voice, and cries out to him:-]

KIDAHACHI.—O Iyaji-San!

IYAJI.—What are you doing there?

KIDAHACHI.—I did intend to go on ahead; but I became afraid, and so I concluded to stop here and wait for you.

IYAJI (who imagines that the fox has taken the shape of Kidahachi to deceive him).—Do not think that you are going to dupe me?

KIDAHACHI.—That is a queer way to talk! I have some nice mochi [14] here which I bought for you.

IYAJI.—Horse-dung cannot be eaten! [15]

KIDAHACHI.—Don't be suspicious!—I am really Kidahachi.

IYAJI (springing upon him furiously).—Yes! you took the form of Kidahachi just to deceive me!

KIDAHACHI.—What do you mean?—What are you going to do to me?

IYAJI.—I am going to kill you! (Throws him down.)

KIDAHACHI.—Oh! you have hurt me very much—please leave me alone!

IYAJI.—If you are really hurt, then let me see you in your real shape! (They struggle together.)

KIDAHACHI.—What are you doing?—putting your hand there?

IYAJI.—I am feeling for your tail. If you don't put out your tail at once, I shall make you! (Takes his towel, and with it ties Kidahachi's hands behind his back, and then drives him before him.)

KIDAHACHI.—Please untie me—please untie me first!

[By this time they have almost reached Akasaka, and Iyaji, seeing a dog, calls the animal, and drags Kidahachi close to it; for a dog is believed to be able to detect a fox through any disguise. But the dog takes no notice of Kidahachi. Iyaji therefore unties him, and apologises; and they both laugh at their previous fears.]

13

But there are some very pleasing forms of the Fox-God.

For example, there stands in a very obscure street of Matsue—one of those streets no stranger is likely to enter unless he loses his way—a temple called Jigyoba-no-Inari, [16] and also Kodomo-no-Inari, or "the Children's Inari." It is very small, but very famous; and it has been recently presented with a pair of new stone foxes, very large, which have gilded teeth and a peculiarly playful expression of countenance. These sit one on each side of the gate: the Male grinning with open jaws, the Female demure, with mouth closed. [17] In the court you will find many ancient little foxes with noses, heads, or tails broken, two great Karashishi before which straw sandals (waraji) have been suspended as votive offerings by somebody with sore feet who has prayed to the Karashishi-Sama that they will heal his affliction, and a shrine of Kojin, occupied by the corpses of many children's dolls. [18]

The grated doors of the shrine of Jigyoba-no-Inari, like those of the shrine of Yaegaki, are white with the multitude of little papers tied to them, which papers signify prayers. But the

prayers are special and curious. To right and to left of the doors, and also above them, odd little votive pictures are pasted upon the walls, mostly representing children in bath-tubs, or children getting their heads shaved. There are also one or two representing children at play. Now the interpretation of these signs and wonders is as follows:

Doubtless you know that Japanese children, as well as Japanese adults, must take a hot bath every day; also that it is the custom to shave the heads of very small boys and girls. But in spite of hereditary patience and strong ancestral tendency to follow ancient custom, young children find both the razor and the hot bath difficult to endure, with their delicate skins. For the Japanese hot bath is very hot (not less than 110 degs F., as a general rule), and even the adult foreigner must learn slowly to bear it, and to appreciate its hygienic value. Also, the Japanese razor is a much less perfect instrument than ours, and is used without any lather, and is apt to hurt a little unless used by the most skilful hands. And finally, Japanese parents are not tyrannical with their children: they pet and coax, very rarely compel or terrify. So that it is quite a dilemma for them when the baby revolts against the bath or mutinies against the razor.

The parents of the child who refuses to be shaved or bathed have recourse to Jigyoba-no-Inari. The god is besought to send one of his retainers to amuse the child, and reconcile it to the new order of things, and render it both docile and happy. Also if a child is naughty, or falls sick, this Inari is appealed to. If the prayer be granted, some small present is made to the temple—sometimes a votive picture, such as those pasted by the door, representing the successful result of the petition. To judge by the number of such pictures, and by the prosperity of the temple, the Kodomo-no-Inari would seem to deserve his popularity. Even during the few minutes I passed in his court I saw three young mothers, with infants at their backs, come to the shrine and pray and make offerings. I noticed that one of the children—remarkably pretty—had never been shaved at all. This was evidently a very obstinate case.

While returning from my visit to the Jigyoba Inari, my Japanese servant, who had guided me there, told me this story:

The son of his next-door neighbour, a boy of seven, went out to play one morning, and disappeared for two days. The parents were not at first uneasy, supposing that the child had gone to the house of a relative, where he was accustomed to pass a day or two from time to time. But on the evening of the second day it was learned that the child had not been at the house in question. Search was at once made; but neither search nor inquiry availed. Late at night, however, a knock was heard at the door of the boy's dwelling, and the mother, hurrying out, found her truant fast asleep on the ground. She could not discover who had knocked. The boy, upon being awakened, laughed, and said that on the morning of his disappearance he had met a lad of about his own age, with very pretty eyes, who had coaxed him away to the woods, where they had played together all day and night and the next day at very curious funny games. But at last he got sleepy, and his comrade took him home. He was not hungry. The comrade promised "to come to-morrow."

But the mysterious comrade never came; and no boy of the description given lived in the neighbourhood. The inference was that the comrade was a fox who wanted to have a little

fun. The subject of the fun mourned long in vain for his merry companion.

14

Some thirty years ago there lived in Matsue an ex-wrestler named Tobikawa, who was a relentless enemy of foxes and used to hunt and kill them. He was popularly believed to enjoy immunity from bewitchment because of his immense strength; but there were some old folks who predicted that he would not die a natural death. This prediction was fulfilled:

Tobikawa died in a very curious manner. He was excessively fond of practical jokes. One day he disguised himself as a Tengu, or sacred goblin, with wings and claws and long nose, and ascended a lofty tree in a sacred grove near Rakusan, whither, after a little while, the innocent peasants thronged to worship him with offerings. While diverting himself with this spectacle, and trying to play his part by springing nimbly from one branch to another, he missed his footing and broke his neck in the fall.

15

But these strange beliefs are swiftly passing away. Year by year more shrines of Inari crumble down, never to be rebuilt. Year by year the statuaries make fewer images of foxes. Year by year fewer victims of fox-possession are taken to the hospitals to be treated according to the best scientific methods by Japanese physicians who speak German. The cause is not to be found in the decadence of the old faiths: a superstition outlives a religion. Much less is it to be sought for in the efforts of proselytising missionaries from the West—most of whom profess an earnest belief in devils. It is purely educational. The omnipotent enemy of superstition is the public school, where the teaching of modern science is unclogged by sectarianism or prejudice; where the children of the poorest may learn the wisdom of the Occident; where there is not a boy or a girl of fourteen ignorant of the great names of Tyndall, of Darwin, of Huxley, of Herbert Spencer. The little hands that break the Fox-god's nose in mischievous play can also write essays upon the evolution of plants and about the geology of Izumo. There is no place for ghostly foxes in the beautiful nature-world revealed by new studies to the new generation. The omnipotent exorciser and reformer is the Kodomo.

Notes for Chapter Fifteen

1 Toyo-uke-bime-no-Kami, or Uka-no-mi-tana ('who has also eight other names), is a female divinity, according to the Kojiki and its commentators. Moreover, the greatest of all Shinto scholars, Hirata, as cited by Satow, says there is really no such god as Inari-San at all—that the very name is an error. But the common people have created the God Inari: therefore he must be presumed to exist—if only for folklorists; and I speak of him as a male deity because I see him so represented in pictures and carvings. As to his mythological existence, his great and wealthy temple at Kyoto is impressive testimony.

2 The white fox is a favourite subject with Japanese artists. Some very beautiful kakemono representing white foxes were on display at the Tokyo exhibition of 1890. Phosphorescent foxes often appear in the old coloured prints, now so rare and precious, made by artists

whose names have become world-famous. Occasionally foxes are represented wandering about at night, with lambent tongues of dim fire—kitsune-bi—above their heads. The end of the fox's tail, both in sculpture and drawing, is ordinarily decorated with the symbolic jewel (tama) of old Buddhist art. I have in my possession one kakemono representing a white fox with a luminous jewel in its tail. I purchased it at the Matsue temple of Inari—"O-Shiroyama-no-Inari-Sama." The art of the kakemono is clumsy; but the conception possesses curious interest.

3 The Japanese candle has a large hollow paper wick. It is usually placed upon an iron point which enters into the orifice of the wick at the flat end.

4 See Professor Chamberlain's *Things Japanese*, under the title "Demoniacal Possession."

5 Translated by Walter Dening.

6 The word shizoku is simply the Chinese for samurai. But the term now means little more than "gentleman" in England.

7 The fox-messenger travels unseen. But if caught in a trap, or injured, his magic fails him, and he becomes visible.

8 The Will-o'-the-Wisp is called Kitsune-bi, or "fox-fire."

9 "Aburage" is a name given to fried bean-curd or tofu.

10 Azukimeshi is a preparation of red beans boiled with rice.

11 The Hoin or Yamabushi was a Buddhist exorciser, usually a priest. Strictly speaking, the Hoin was a Yamabushi of higher rank. The Yamabushi used to practise divination as well as exorcism. They were forbidden to exercise these professions by the present government; and most of the little temples formerly occupied by them have disappeared or fallen into ruin. But among the peasantry Buddhist exorcisers are still called to attend cases of fox-possession, and while acting as exorcisers are still spoken of as Yamabushi.

12 A most curious paper on the subject of Ten-gan, or Infinite Vision—being the translation of a Buddhist sermon by the priest Sata Kaiseki—appeared in vol. vii. of the *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, from the pen of Mr. J. M. James. It contains an interesting consideration of the supernatural powers of the Fox.

13 All the portable lanterns used to light the way upon dark nights bear a mon or crest of the owner.

14 Cakes made of rice flour and often sweetened with sugar.

15 It is believed that foxes amuse themselves by causing people to eat horse-dung in the belief that they are eating mochi, or to enter a cesspool in the belief they are taking a bath.

16 In Jigyobamachi, a name signifying "earthwork-street." It stands upon land reclaimed from

swamp.

17 This seems to be the immemorial artistic law for the demeanour of all symbolic guardians of holy places, such as the Karashishi, and the Ascending and Descending Dragons carved upon panels, or pillars. At Kumano temple even the Suijin, or warrior-guardians, who frown behind the gratings of the chambers of the great gateway, are thus represented—one with mouth open, the other with closed lips.

On inquiring about the origin of this distinction between the two symbolic figures, I was told by a young Buddhist scholar that the male figure in such representations is supposed to be pronouncing the sound "A," and the figure with closed lips the sound of nasal "N"—corresponding to the Alpha and Omega of the Greek alphabet, and also emblematic of the Beginning and the End. In the Lotus of the Good Law, Buddha so reveals himself, as the cosmic Alpha and Omega, and the Father of the World,—like Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita.

Issendai's note: Nowadays, these figures are sometimes called "Ah" and "Un," both of which are casual ways of saying "Yes."

18 There is one exception to the general custom of giving the dolls of dead children, or the wrecks of dolls, to Kojin. Those images of the God of Calligraphy and Scholarship which are always presented as gifts to boys on the Boys' Festival are given, when broken, to Tenjin himself, not to Kojin; at least such is the custom in Matsue.

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flowing of the centuries and snickering weirdly at mankind. Their backs are clad with finest green velvet of old mosses; their limbs are spotted and their tails are tipped with the dead gold or the dead silver of delicate fungi. And the places they most haunt are the loveliest—high shadowy groves where the uguisu sings in green twilight, above some voiceless shrine with its lamps and its lions of stone so mossed as to seem things born of the soil—like mushrooms.

I found it difficult to understand why, out of every thousand foxes, nine hundred should have broken noses. The main street of the city of Matsue might be paved from end to end with the tips of the noses of mutilated Izumo foxes. A friend answered my expression of wonder in this regard by the simple but suggestive word, "Kodomo", which means, "The children"

2.

Inari the name by which the Fox-God is generally known, signifies "Load-of-Rice." But the antique name of the Deity is the August-Spirit-of-Food: he is the Uka-no-mi-tama-no-mikoto of the Kojiki. [1] In much more recent times only has he borne the name that indicates his connection with the fox-cult, Miketsu-no-Kami, or the Three-Fox-God. Indeed, the conception of the fox as a supernatural being does not seem to have been introduced into Japan before the tenth or eleventh century; and although a shrine of the deity, with statues of foxes, may be found in the court of most of the large Shinto temples, it is worthy of note that in all the vast domains of the oldest Shinto shrine in Japan—Kitzuki—you cannot find the image of a fox. And it is only in modern art—the art of Toyokuni and others—that Inari is represented as a bearded man riding a white fox. [2]

Inari is not worshipped as the God of Rice only; indeed, there are many Inari just as in antique Greece there were many deities called Hermes, Zeus, Athena, Poseidon—one in the knowledge of the learned, but essentially different in the imagination of the common people. Inari has been multiplied by reason of his different attributes. For instance, Matsue has a Kamiya-San-no-Inari-San, who is the God of Coughs and Bad Colds—afflictions extremely common and remarkably severe in the Land of Izumo. He has a temple in the Kamachi at which he is worshipped under the vulgar appellation of Kaze-no-Kami and the politer one of Kamiya-San-no-Inari. And those who are cured of their coughs and colds after having prayed to him, bring to his temple offerings of tofu.

At Oba, likewise, there is a particular Inari, of great fame. Fastened to the wall of his shrine is a large box full of small clay foxes. The pilgrim who has a prayer to make puts one of these little foxes in his sleeve and carries it home. He must keep it, and pay it all due honour, until such time as his petition has been granted. Then he must take it back to the temple, and restore it to the box, and, if he be able, make some small gift to the shrine.

Inari is often worshipped as a healer; and still more frequently as a deity having power to give wealth. (Perhaps because all the wealth of Old Japan was reckoned in koku of rice.) Therefore his foxes are sometimes represented holding keys in their mouths. And from being the deity who gives wealth, Inari has also become in some localities the special divinity of the joro class. There is, for example, an Inari temple worth visiting in the neighbourhood of the Yoshiwara at Yokohama. It stands in the same court with a temple of Benten, and is more

than usually large for a shrine of Inari. You approach it through a succession of torii one behind the other: they are of different heights, diminishing in size as they are placed nearer to the temple, and planted more and more closely in proportion to their smallness. Before each torii sit a pair of weird foxes—one to the right and one to the left. The first pair are large as greyhounds; the second two are much smaller; and the sizes of the rest lessen as the dimensions of the torii lessen. At the foot of the wooden steps of the temple there is a pair of very graceful foxes of dark grey stone, wearing pieces of red cloth about their necks. Upon the steps themselves are white wooden foxes—one at each end of each step—each successive pair being smaller than the pair below; and at the threshold of the doorway are two very little foxes, not more than three inches high, sitting on sky-blue pedestals. These have the tips of their tails gilded. Then, if you look into the temple you will see on the left something like a long low table on which are placed thousands of tiny fox-images, even smaller than those in the doorway, having only plain white tails. There is no image of Inari; indeed, I have never seen an image of Inari as yet in any Inari temple. On the altar appear the usual emblems of Shinto; and before it, just opposite the doorway, stands a sort of lantern, having glass sides and a wooden bottom studded with nail-points on which to fix votive candles. [3]

And here, from time to time, if you will watch, you will probably see more than one handsome girl, with brightly painted lips and the beautiful antique attire that no maiden or wife may wear, come to the foot of the steps, toss a coin into the money-box at the door, and call out: "O-rosoku!" which means "an honourable candle." Immediately, from an inner chamber, some old man will enter the shrine-room with a lighted candle, stick it upon a nail-point in the lantern, and then retire. Such candle-offerings are always accompanied by secret prayers for good-fortune. But this Inari is worshipped by many besides members of the joro class.

The pieces of coloured cloth about the necks of the foxes are also votive offerings.

3

Fox-images in Izumo seem to be more numerous than in other provinces, and they are symbols there, so far as the mass of the peasantry is concerned, of something else besides the worship of the Rice-Deity. Indeed, the old conception of the Deity of Rice-fields has been overshadowed and almost effaced among the lowest classes by a weird cult totally foreign to the spirit of pure Shinto—the Fox-cult. The worship of the retainer has almost replaced the worship of the god. Originally the Fox was sacred to Inari only as the Tortoise is still sacred to Kōmpira; the Deer to the Great Deity of Kasuga; the Rat to Daikoku; the Tai-fish to Ebisu; the White Serpent to Benten; or the Centipede to Bishamon, God of Battles. But in the course of centuries the Fox usurped divinity. And the stone images of him are not the only outward evidences of his cult. At the rear of almost every Inari temple you will generally find in the wall of the shrine building, one or two feet above the ground, an aperture about eight inches in diameter and perfectly circular. It is often made so as to be closed at will by a sliding plank. This circular orifice is a Fox-hole, and if you find one open, and look within, you will probably see offerings of tofu or other food which foxes are supposed to be fond of. You will also, most likely, find grains of rice scattered on some little projection of woodwork below or near the hole, or placed on the edge of the hole itself; and you may see some peasant clap his hands

before the hole, utter some little prayer, and swallow a grain or two of that rice in the belief that it will either cure or prevent sickness. Now the fox for whom such a hole is made is an invisible fox, a phantom fox—the fox respectfully referred to by the peasant as O-Kitsune-San. If he ever suffers himself to become visible, his colour is said to be snowy white.

According to some, there are various kinds of ghostly foxes. According to others, there are two sorts of foxes only, the Inari-fox (O-Kitsune-San) and the wild fox (kitsune). Some people again class foxes into Superior and Inferior Foxes, and allege the existence of four Superior Sorts—Byakko, Kokko, Jenko, and Reiko—all of which possess supernatural powers. Others again count only three kinds of foxes—the Field-fox, the Man-fox, and the Inari-fox. But many confound the Field-fox or wild fox with the Man-fox, and others identify the Inari-fox with the Man-fox. One cannot possibly unravel the confusion of these beliefs, especially among the peasantry. The beliefs vary, moreover, in different districts. I have only been able, after a residence of fourteen months in Izumo, where the superstition is especially strong, and marked by certain unique features, to make the following very loose summary of them:

All foxes have supernatural power. There are good and bad foxes. The Inari-fox is good, and the bad foxes are afraid of the Inari-fox. The worst fox is the Ninko or Hito-kitsune (Man-fox): this is especially the fox of demoniacal possession. It is no larger than a weasel, and somewhat similar in shape, except for its tail, which is like the tail of any other fox. It is rarely seen, keeping itself invisible, except to those to whom it attaches itself. It likes to live in the houses of men, and to be nourished by them, and to the homes where it is well cared for it will bring prosperity. It will take care that the rice-fields shall never want for water, nor the cooking-pot for rice. But if offended, it will bring misfortune to the household, and ruin to the crops. The wild fox (Nogitsune) is also bad. It also sometimes takes possession of people; but it is especially a wizard, and prefers to deceive by enchantment. It has the power of assuming any shape and of making itself invisible; but the dog can always see it, so that it is extremely afraid of the dog. Moreover, while assuming another shape, if its shadow fall upon water, the water will only reflect the shadow of a fox. The peasantry kill it; but he who kills a fox incurs the risk of being bewitched by that fox's kindred, or even by the ki, or ghost of the fox. Still if one eat the flesh of a fox, he cannot be enchanted afterwards. The Nogitsune also enters houses. Most families having foxes in their houses have only the small kind, or Ninko; but occasionally both kinds will live together under the same roof. Some people say that if the Nogitsune lives a hundred years it becomes all white, and then takes rank as an Inari-fox.

There are curious contradictions involved in these beliefs, and other contradictions will be found in the following pages of this sketch. To define the fox-superstition at all is difficult, not only on account of the confusion of ideas on the subject among the believers themselves, but also on account of the variety of elements out of which it has been shapen. Its origin is Chinese [4]; but in Japan it became oddly blended with the worship of a Shinto deity, and again modified and expanded by the Buddhist concepts of thaumaturgy and magic. So far as the common people are concerned, it is perhaps safe to say that they pay devotion to foxes chiefly because they fear them. The peasant still worships what he fears.

It is more than doubtful whether the popular notions about different classes of foxes, and about the distinction between the fox of Inari and the fox of possession, were ever much more clearly established than they are now, except in the books of old literati. Indeed, there exists a letter from Hideyoshi to the Fox-God which would seem to show that in the time of the great Taiko the Inari-fox and the demon fox were considered identical. This letter is still preserved at Nara, in the Buddhist temple called Todaiji:

KYOTO, the seventeenth day of the Third Month.

TO INARI DAIMYOJIN:—

My Lord—I have the honour to inform you that one of the foxes under your jurisdiction has bewitched one of my servants, causing her and others a great deal of trouble. I have to request that you will make minute inquiries into the matter, and endeavour to find out the reason of your subject misbehaving in this way, and let me know the result.

If it turns out that the fox has no adequate reason to give for his behaviour, you are to arrest and punish him at once. If you hesitate to take action in this matter, I shall issue orders for the destruction of every fox in the land.

Any other particulars that you may wish to be informed of in reference to what has occurred, you can learn from the high-priest YOSHIDA.

Apologising for the imperfections of this letter, I have the honour to be Your obedient servant,
Your obedient servant,
HIDEYOSHI TAIKO [5]

But there certainly were some distinctions established in localities, owing to the worship of Inari by the military caste. With the samurai of Izumo, the Rice-God, for obvious reasons, was a highly popular deity; and you can still find in the garden of almost every old shizoku residence in Matsue, a small shrine of Inari Daimyoin, with little stone foxes seated before it. And in the imagination of the lower classes, all samurai families possessed foxes. But the samurai foxes inspired no fear. They were believed to be "good foxes"; and the superstition of the Ninko or Hito-kitsune does not seem to have unpleasantly affected any samurai families of Matsue during the feudal era. It is only since the military caste has been abolished, and its name, simply as a body of gentry, changed to shizoku, [6] that some families have become victims of the superstition through intermarriage with the chonin or mercantile classes, among whom the belief has always been strong.

By the peasantry the Matsudaira daimyo of Izumo were supposed to be the greatest fox-possessors. One of them was believed to use foxes as messengers to Tokyo (be it observed that a fox can travel, according to popular credence, from Yokohama to London in a few hours); and there is some Matsue story about a fox having been caught in a trap [7] near Tokyo, attached to whose neck was a letter written by the prince of Izumo only the same morning. The great Inari temple of Inari in the castle grounds—O-Shiroyama-no-InariSama—with its thousands upon thousands of foxes of stone, is considered by the country people a striking proof of the devotion of the Matsudaira, not to Inari, but to foxes.

At present, however, it is no longer possible to establish distinctions of genera in this ghostly zoology, where each species grows into every other. It is not even possible to disengage the ki or Soul of the Fox and the August-Spirit-of-Food from the confusion in which both have become hopelessly blended, under the name Inari by the vague conception of their peasant-worshippers. The old Shinto mythology is indeed quite explicit about the August-Spirit-of-Food, and quite silent upon the subject of foxes. But the peasantry in Izumo, like the peasantry of Catholic Europe, make mythology for themselves. If asked whether they pray to Inari as to an evil or a good deity, they will tell you that Inari is good, and that Inari-foxes are good. They will tell you of white foxes and dark foxes—of foxes to be revered and foxes to be killed—of the good fox which cries "kon-kon," and the evil fox which cries "kwai-kwai." But the peasant possessed by the fox cries out: "I am Inari—Tamabushi-no-Inari!"—or some other Inari.

5

Goblin foxes are peculiarly dreaded in Izumo for three evil habits attributed to them. The first is that of deceiving people by enchantment, either for revenge or pure mischief. The second is that of quartering themselves as retainers upon some family, and thereby making that family a terror to its neighbours. The third and worst is that of entering into people and taking diabolical possession of them and tormenting them into madness. This affliction is called "kitsune-tsuki."

The favourite shape assumed by the goblin fox for the purpose of deluding mankind is that of a beautiful woman; much less frequently the form of a young man is taken in order to deceive some one of the other sex. Innumerable are the stories told or written about the wives of fox-women. And a dangerous woman of that class whose art is to enslave men, and strip them of all they possess, is popularly named by a word of deadly insult—kitsune.

Many declare that the fox never really assumes human shape; but that he only deceives people into the belief that he does so by a sort of magnetic power, or by spreading about them a certain magical effluvium.

The fox does not always appear in the guise of a woman for evil purposes. There are several stories, and one really pretty play, about a fox who took the shape of a beautiful woman, and married a man, and bore him children—all out of gratitude for some favour received—the happiness of the family being only disturbed by some odd carnivorous propensities on the part of the offspring. Merely to achieve a diabolical purpose, the form of a woman is not always the best disguise. There are men quite insusceptible to feminine witchcraft. But the fox is never at a loss for a disguise; he can assume more forms than Proteus. Furthermore, he can make you see or hear or imagine whatever he wishes you to see, hear, or imagine. He can make you see out of Time and Space; he can recall the past and reveal the future. His power has not been destroyed by the introduction of Western ideas; for did he not, only a few years ago, cause phantom trains to run upon the Tokkaido railway, thereby greatly confounding, and terrifying the engineers of the company? But, like all goblins, he prefers to haunt solitary places. At night he is fond of making queer ghostly lights, [8] in semblance of lantern-fires, flit about dangerous places; and to protect yourself from this trick of his, it is

necessary to learn that by joining your hands in a particular way, so as to leave a diamond-shaped aperture between the crossed fingers, you can extinguish the witch-fire at any distance simply by blowing through the aperture in the direction of the light and uttering a certain Buddhist formula.

But it is not only at night that the fox manifests his power for mischief: at high noon he may tempt you to go where you are sure to get killed, or frighten you into going by creating some apparition or making you imagine that you feel an earthquake. Consequently the old-fashioned peasant, on seeing anything extremely queer, is slow to credit the testimony of his own eyes. The most interesting and valuable witness of the stupendous eruption of Bandai-San in 1888—which blew the huge volcano to pieces and devastated an area of twenty-seven square miles, levelling forests, turning rivers from their courses, and burying numbers of villages with all their inhabitants—was an old peasant who had watched the whole cataclysm from a neighbouring peak as unconcerned as if he had been looking at a drama. He saw a black column of ashes and steam rise to the height of twenty thousand feet and spread out at its summit in the shape of an umbrella, blotting out the sun. Then he felt a strange rain pouring upon him, hotter than the water of a bath. Then all became black; and he felt the mountain beneath him shaking to its roots, and heard a crash of thunders that seemed like the sound of the breaking of a world. But he remained quite still until everything was over. He had made up his mind not to be afraid—deeming that all he saw and heard was delusion wrought by the witchcraft of a fox.

6

Strange is the madness of those into whom demon foxes enter. Sometimes they run naked shouting through the streets. Sometimes they lie down and froth at the mouth, and yelp as a fox yelps. And on some part of the body of the possessed a moving lump appears under the skin, which seems to have a life of its own. Prick it with a needle, and it glides instantly to another place. By no grasp can it be so tightly compressed by a strong hand that it will not slip from under the fingers. Possessed folk are also said to speak and write languages of which they were totally ignorant prior to possession. They eat only what foxes are believed to like—tofu, aburage, [9] azukimeshi, [10] etc.—and they eat a great deal, alleging that not they, but the possessing foxes, are hungry.

It not infrequently happens that the victims of fox-possession are cruelly treated by their relatives—being severely burned and beaten in the hope that the fox may be thus driven away. Then the Hoin [11] or Yamabushi is sent for—the exorciser. The exorciser argues with the fox, who speaks through the mouth of the possessed. When the fox is reduced to silence by religious argument upon the wickedness of possessing people, he usually agrees to go away on condition of being supplied with plenty of tofu or other food; and the food promised must be brought immediately to that particular Inari temple of which the fox declares himself a retainer. For the possessing fox, by whomsoever sent, usually confesses himself the servant of a certain Inari though sometimes even calling himself the god.

As soon as the possessed has been freed from the possessor, he falls down senseless, and remains for a long time prostrate. And it is said, also, that he who has once been possessed

by a fox will never again be able to eat tofu, aburage, azukimeshi, or any of those things which foxes like.

7

It is believed that the Man-fox (Hito-kitsune) cannot be seen. But if he goes close to still water, his SHADOW can be seen in the water. Those "having foxes" are therefore supposed to avoid the vicinity of rivers and ponds.

The invisible fox, as already stated, attaches himself to persons. Like a Japanese servant, he belongs to the household. But if a daughter of that household marry, the fox not only goes to that new family, following the bride, but also colonises his kind in all those families related by marriage or kinship with the husband's family. Now every fox is supposed to have a family of seventy-five—neither more, nor less than seventy-five—and all these must be fed. So that although such foxes, like ghosts, eat very little individually, it is expensive to have foxes. The fox-possessors (kitsune-mochi) must feed their foxes at regular hours; and the foxes always eat first—all the seventy-five. As soon as the family rice is cooked in the kama (a great iron cooking-pot), the kitsune-mochi taps loudly on the side of the vessel, and uncovers it. Then the foxes rise up through the floor. And although their eating is soundless to human ear and invisible to human eye, the rice slowly diminishes. Wherefore it is fearful for a poor man to have foxes.

But the cost of nourishing foxes is the least evil connected with the keeping of them. Foxes have no fixed code of ethics, and have proved themselves untrustworthy servants. They may initiate and long maintain the prosperity of some family; but should some grave misfortune fall upon that family in spite of the efforts of its seventy-five invisible retainers, then these will suddenly flee away, taking all the valuables of the household along with them. And all the fine gifts that foxes bring to their masters are things which have been stolen from somebody else. It is therefore extremely immoral to keep foxes. It is also dangerous for the public peace, inasmuch as a fox, being a goblin, and devoid of human susceptibilities, will not take certain precautions. He may steal the next-door neighbour's purse by night and lay it at his own master's threshold, so that if the next-door neighbour happens to get up first and see it there is sure to be a row.

Another evil habit of foxes is that of making public what they hear said in private, and taking it upon themselves to create undesirable scandal. For example, a fox attached to the family of Kobayashi-San hears his master complain about his neighbour Nakayama-San, whom he secretly dislikes. Therewith the zealous retainer runs to the house of Nakayama-San, and enters into his body, and torments him grievously, saying: "I am the retainer of Kobayashi-San to whom you did such-and-such a wrong; and until such time as he command me to depart, I shall continue to torment you."

And last, but worst of all the risks of possessing foxes, is the danger that they may become wroth with some member of the family. Certainly a fox may be a good friend, and make rich the home in which he is domiciled. But as he is not human, and as his motives and feelings are not those of men, but of goblins, it is difficult to avoid incurring his displeasure. At the most unexpected moment he may take offence without any cause knowingly having been

given, and there is no saying what the consequences may be. For the fox possesses Instinctive Infinite Vision—and the Ten-Ni-Tsun, or All-Hearing Ear—and the Ta-Shin-Tsun, which is the Knowledge of the Most Secret Thoughts of Others—and Shiyuku-Mei-Tsun, which is the Knowledge of the Past—and Zhin-Kiyan-Tsun, which means the Knowledge of the Universal Present—and also the Powers of Transformation and of Transmutation. [12] So that even without including his special powers of bewitchment, he is by nature a being almost omnipotent for evil.

8

For all these reasons, and, doubtless many more, people believed to have foxes are shunned. Intermarriage with a fox-possessing family is out of the question; and many a beautiful and accomplished girl in Izumo cannot secure a husband because of the popular belief that her family harbours foxes. As a rule, Izumo girls do not like to marry out of their own province; but the daughters of a kitsune-mochi must either marry into the family of another kitsune-mochi, or find a husband far away from the Province of the Gods. Rich fox-possessing families have not overmuch difficulty in disposing of their daughters by one of the means above indicated; but many a fine sweet girl of the poorer kitsune-mochi is condemned by superstition to remain unwedded. It is not because there are none to love her and desirous of marrying her—young men who have passed through public schools and who do not believe in foxes. It is because popular superstition cannot be yet safely defied in country districts except by the wealthy. The consequences of such defiance would have to be borne, not merely by the husband, but by his whole family, and by all other families related thereunto. Which are consequences to be thought about!

Among men believed to have foxes there are some who know how to turn the superstition to good account. The country-folk, as a general rule, are afraid of giving offence to a kitsune-mochi, lest he should send some of his invisible servants to take possession of them. Accordingly, certain kitsune-mochi have obtained great ascendancy over the communities in which they live. In the town of Yonago, for example, there is a certain prosperous chonin whose will is almost law, and whose opinions are never opposed. He is practically the ruler of the place, and in a fair way of becoming a very wealthy man. All because he is thought to have foxes.

Wrestlers, as a class, boast of their immunity from fox-possession, and care neither for kitsune-mochi nor for their spectral friends. Very strong men are believed to be proof against all such goblinry. Foxes are said to be afraid of them, and instances are cited of a possessing fox declaring: "I wished to enter into your brother, but he was too strong for me; so I have entered into you, as I am resolved to be revenged upon some one of your family."

9

Now the belief in foxes does not affect persons only: it affects property. It affects the value of real estate in Izumo to the amount of hundreds of thousands.

The land of a family supposed to have foxes cannot be sold at a fair price. People are afraid to buy it; for it is believed the foxes may ruin the new proprietor. The difficulty of obtaining a

Goatman Is Hairy, Horny ... And This Bah-h-dass Won't Go Away

Samantha Guff

Posted: 12/01/2015 08:44 AM EST

huffingtonpost.com

The half-goat half-human creature was reportedly spotted across the U.S. Or was it?

A big hairy monster was once hiding under your bed, just like it was hiding under every kid's bed.

But faster than you can say, "Mommy, can I sleep with the light on?" one of these beasts is making a comeback, even though you're all grown up now, or so you think.

Goatman -- the half-goat, half-man hybrid -- is the subject of a decades-old urban legend. But now, the Internet thinks he's returned to terrorize Maryland and various other parts of the country.

Goatman sightings have spread across various news outlets within the past week, and the beast was even a trending topic on Facebook.

But has anyone actually seen the Goatman recently?

"There are always 'new' Internet-generated reports of dogmen, goatmen and similar creatures," cryptozoologist Loren Coleman, who has studied 'goat-men' in the past, told HuffPost in an email. "In general, they are not new, but merely recycled."

Legend has it that the Goatman was an experiment gone awry -- a scientist attempting to combine a human and a goat, but accidentally created a murderous creature that got loose and terrorized the streets of Maryland in 1957.

Still, recent Goatman reports appear to be unfounded. News outlets that covered the story linked back to a recent Movie Pilot post, which doesn't mention any recent Goatman sightings.

Other sources include a Cult of Weird post from last year about a book on the topic and a Goatman video posted last year on the YouTube channel Strange Mysteries, but neither report any Goatman sightings within the past week.

Looks like it's just another case of internet hype. People on Twitter didn't seem too psyched about the Goatman legend resurgence either. Many immediately brushed it off as false:

However, that doesn't mean there aren't people out there masquerading as a half-goat, half-man creature. One example is of a hunter who dressed like a goat to blend in with his prey. And earlier this year, a Niagara Falls recycling organization introduced their new mascot named Totes McGoats, who looks eerily like the alleged Goatman.

The recent Goatman buildup is reminiscent of the alleged sightings of the "Jersey Devil" in October -- the Internet was flooded with stories about the Jersey Devil urban legend after a New Jersey man posted a photo of what appeared to be the famed furball in mid-flight.

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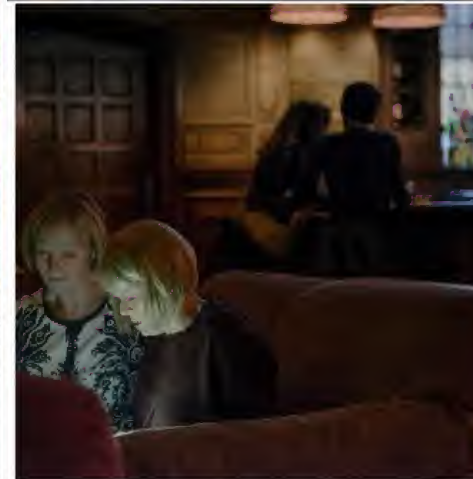
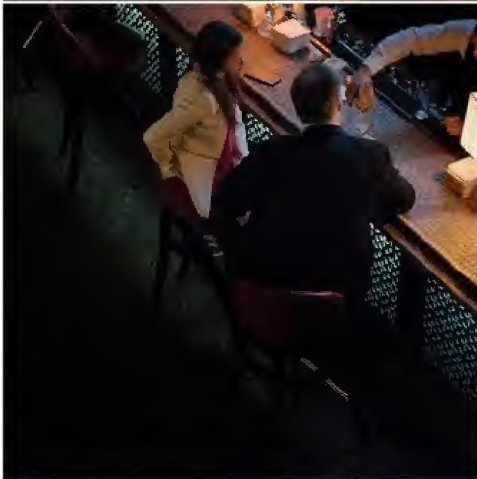
Inside The Campbell Apartment, Grand Central's Hidden Historic Bar

gothamist.com

by Jen Carlson in Food on Dec 10, 2015 11:00 am



Tucked away in a dark corner of Grand Central Terminal, there's a cocktail lounge that will transport you back to another era, when rail travel was more romantic and men looked like Don Draper. The Campbell Apartment started out as an office space for John W. Campbell in 1923. It was never a residence, but

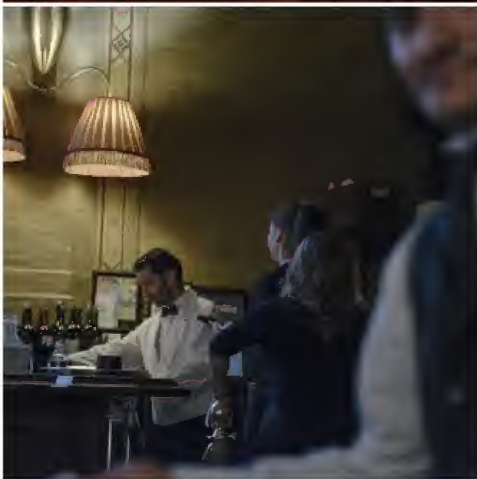


Campbell—a railroad tycoon who served on New York Central's Board of Directors—did entertain there, adding a piano and pipe organ, and often inviting around 50 guests to come hear famous musicians play private recitals. He even had a butler there, whose name was Stackhouse.

Under Campbell's lock and key, the room was transformed from a bare barracks to a galleried hall of a 13th century Florentine palace. When he died in 1957, things became a little dismal—the gorgeous space deteriorated as it went through various occupants. Through the years drop ceilings were installed, as it became a signalman's office, a closet that stored transit police guns, and at one point a jail.



It wasn't until 1999 that the semi-hidden space opened its doors to the public as a bar, and Campbell's touches were carefully restored. The mahogany, the carpeting, the vases, and most notably, the safe he hid in the fireplace is now displayed there, a reminder of his wealth.



There are also claims that Campbell's ghost haunts the space—we were told that the Eastern Paranormal Investigation Center conducted an extensive examination there and validated the ghost sightings. A rep told us, "Some customers and staff have pointed out eerie incidents that have taken place at the cocktail lounge, such

as unexplained gusts of cold air, taps from behind without anyone in sight, sounds of an organ playing, and doors mysteriously shutting on their own." Owner Mark Grossich has corroborated these paranormal activities.... but after one of Paris DuRante's Prohibition Punches you won't mind.

To get into the Campbell Apartment, you simply must dress the part. They require proper attire: no baseball caps, t-shirts, or athletic shoes. Sadly, however, there wasn't a fedora in sight when we dropped by.

The Campbell Apartment is located inside Grand Central Terminal (off the Vanderbilt Avenue entrance), and their hours are Mon-Sat 12 p.m to 1 a.m., and Sunday they close at midnight.

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How Internet sleuths on Facebook and Reddit solved the 20-year-old mystery of a missing teenager

By Caitlin Dewey

December 10 at 4:16 PM

washingtonpost.com



(Imgur)

Twenty years after the van he was in ran off the road in Northern Virginia, and 10 years after the Internet started trying to close his case, the man known only as “Grateful Doe” finally has a name.

On Wednesday, WMBF-TV reports, both the Virginia Medical Examiner’s office and the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System confirmed that Grateful Doe is 19-year-old Jason Callahan — the man first identified by sleuths on Reddit and Facebook

almost a year ago.

[In-depth: Crowdsourcing may have solved a 20-year-old cold case]

Callahan, originally from South Carolina, had been hitch-hiking up the East Coast following the Grateful Dead’s ‘95 tour when the car he was traveling in was involved in a fatal car accident in Emporia, Va. The driver of the car, a 21-year-old man, was immediately identified by his family. But no one knew who the man’s passenger was, and his injuries made it difficult to describe or sketch him accurately.

To make matters worse, the so-called Grateful Doe didn’t match any missing persons report. Because she was unsure when and where her son had actually gone missing since leaving home, Callahan’s mother, Margaretta Evans, never filed a report.

“It just broke my heart,” said Lauren Rutley, who helped publicize Doe’s case online. “That he was so young, and no one had reported him missing at the time.”

Rutley was one of dozens of volunteers and amateur detectives who worked on Grateful Doe’s case over a period of nearly 10 years. Users on Websleuths, a forum popular with cold-case and true-crime fanatics, had been cross-referencing Grateful Doe’s case against hundreds of entries in the missing persons’ database since July 2005. The search only heated up last December, however, when Reddit took on the case.

That month, an Australian woman with the handle greymetal opened a Grateful Doe subreddit and posted his picture to Imgur. She and other volunteers circulated the image widely, particularly within Grateful Dead fan communities; they also posted it to places like r/washingtondc and BuzzFeed.

She filed a missing person's report for Callahan the next day, and police immediately opened an investigation. It took 11 months to run Doe's DNA.

“THE NEWS WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR!!!!” Two volunteers posted on Facebook Wednesday. “[I’ve] been sitting here for how long in shock both for the sadness of his family and the fact that here on Facebook we are making a difference. Because of everyone here this man will finally make his way home!!!”

Evans did not immediately respond to a message from a Washington Post reporter; a volunteer who claims to be in contact with the family wrote on Facebook that “she is hurting more than anyone ever should.”

Since social media found Evans's son 11 months ago, however, she herself has become active in the online sleuthing movement. On Facebook, she constantly posts images of abused dogs and missing children.

"Please share," she writes above each of them.

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Thieves Used This Ancient Gravestone To Steal \$45k Of Jewelry

Lee Moran

Posted: 11/27/2015 07:29 AM EST

huffingtonpost.com

Precious gems gone in 30 seconds.

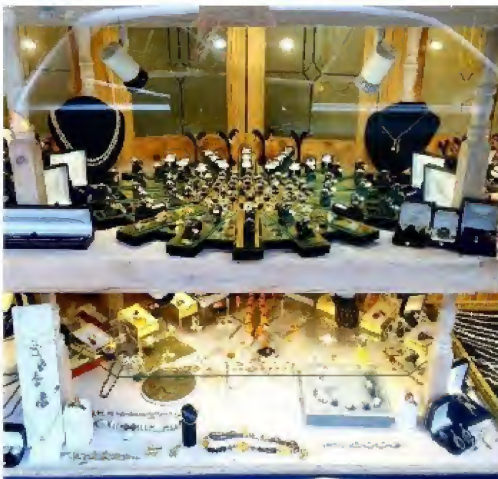


Devon and Cornwall Police

A thief used an ancient granite gravestone to smash into a jewelry store and steal \$45,000 worth of bangles, rings and bracelets.

Police said an Art Nouveau ruby necklace and a white gold cluster ring were among the most valuable items stolen in the raid on the store in southwest England early Saturday.

The burglar used the tombstone -- with the initials "IHS" engraved on the front -- as a battering ram to break the front door lock of Little Jems Jewelers in St Ives, Cornwall, reports the BBC.



Devon and Cornwall Police



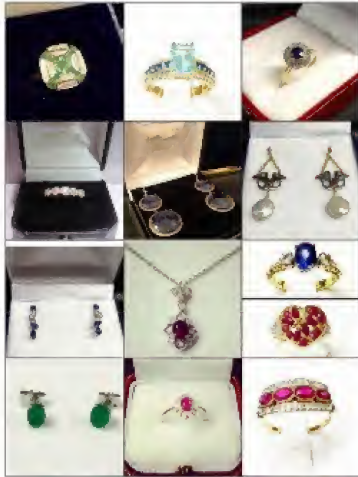
Devon and Cornwall Police

Surveillance camera captured him opening two display cases full of valuables and throwing the jewelry into a bucket, Devon and Cornwall Police revealed in

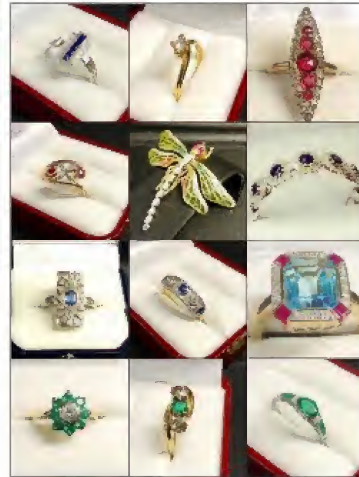
a Facebook post.

The entire theft took just 30 seconds and he fled immediately after, Yahoo News reports.

Store owner Jamie Wright discovered the burglary hours later, his daughter Amber Orchard said.



Devon and Cornwall Police



Devon and Cornwall Police

"They have taken a lot of stock -- mainly gold jewelry, but also sapphires, diamonds, rubies and emeralds," she told the TV station.

Devon and Cornwall Police said it was unclear how many people were involved in the raid, but only one man was captured on security camera footage.

The thief behind the Cannes 2013 heist in France -- which ranks among the largest jewelry theft in history -- was similarly quick in executing his crime.

A lone gunman made off with gemstones and watches worth around \$136 million, in the daring operation, which The New York Times reported lasted "about as long as a movie trailer."

The robber walked into the Carlton Intercontinental Hotel, which featured in Alfred Hitchcock's movie "To Catch a Thief," and threatened unarmed guards before he vanished with his cache down a side street.

The jewels, belonging to Israeli billionaire Lev Leviev, have never been recovered. A \$1.3 million reward is on offer for information leading to their retrieval.

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Missouri State Rep Files Bill to Put Gun Sales Under Exact Same Restrictions as Abortions

jezebel.com

Anna Merlan
12/03/15 5:10pm



Missouri State Rep Files Bill to Put Gun Sales Under Exact Same Restrictions as Abortions

Missouri State Representative Stacey Newman is deeply concerned about the state's gun violence, and figures perhaps it might help matters to make guns a little harder to buy. Luckily, she's got a perfect model right in front of her: Missouri's abortion restrictions, some of the most onerous in the country.

As *St. Louis* magazine reports, Newman has pre-filed a bill for the upcoming

legislative session that would subject gun buyers to the exact same restrictions currently faced by people seeking abortions.

You can read the full text of House Bill 1397 [here](#); it sweetly proposes that gun buyers have a 72-hour waiting period imposed upon them, and have to "confer and discuss with a licensed physician" and risk factors that might arise "from the proposed firearm purchase."

Prior to any firearm purchase in this state, a prospective firearm purchaser shall, at least seventy-two hours prior to the initial request to purchase a firearm from a licensed firearm dealer located at least one hundred twenty miles from such purchaser's legal residence, confer and discuss with a licensed physician the indicators and contraindicators and risk factors, including any physical, psychological, or situational factors, that may arise with the proposed firearm purchase. Such physician shall then evaluate the prospective firearm purchaser for such indicators and contraindicators and risk factors and determine if such firearm purchase would increase such purchaser's risk of experiencing an adverse physical, emotional, or other health reaction.

Gun buyers would also have to watch a 30-minute video "on fatal firearm injuries" and verify in writing that he or she viewed the entire video "in the presence of a licensed firearm dealer." There's more:

Verify in writing by a licensed physician that the purchaser has toured an emergency trauma center in the nearest qualified urban hospital on a weekend between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. when gun violence victims are

present.

Within seventy-two hours of a firearm purchase, the prospective firearm purchaser shall meet with at least two families who have been victims of violence involving a firearm and two local faith leaders who have officiated, within the past year, a funeral of a victim of violence involving a firearm who was under the age of eighteen

Missouri passed a 72-hour waiting period on abortions in 2014, among the longest in the country. The Missouri House attempted to pass a bill last year that would have required women to watch an “explanatory video” on abortions, which died in committee.

Sponsored

Newman knows, of course, that the bill is doomed to failure. As *St. Louis* points out, she proposed a similar measure last year that would have restricted vasectomies, making them only legal to protect a man from serious injury or death. And while useless gestures should generally be avoided in politics, this one, at least, makes a point, as Newman told the magazine in a statement: “Since restrictive policies regarding a constitutionally protected medical procedure are the GOP’s legislative priority each year, it makes sense that their same restrictions apply to those who may commit gun violence. Our city mayors and law enforcement drastically need help in saving lives.”

Contact the author at anna.merlan@jezebel.com.

Public PGP key

PGP fingerprint: 67B5 5767 9D6F 652E 8EFD 76F5 3CF0 DAF2 79E5 1FB6

- jinniAnna Merlan
12/03/15 5:46pm

I get what she is doing (and the paragraphs are spot-on), and yet I feel ambivalent since it reinforces the false parallel of choice being akin to taking a life. Am I the only one? Am I being too picky? It is extremely clever, I know.

- Mayotonillajinni
12/03/15 5:50pm

I so want somebody to talk about the need of more gun control that I do not care.

- Sqarrjinni
12/03/15 5:50pm

You’re right, there is that unfortunate angle.

- linaleejinni
12/03/15 5:51pm

I look at it more as “See, *this* is what should actually have a waiting period” rather than drawing a direct parallel. Because a lot of the restrictions on abortions would

actually be totally reasonable and helpful when applied to gun purchasing.

- acornjinni
12/03/15 5:51pm

Yeah, I prefer the Satanic Temple's tactic of circumventing all of the wait periods and useless ultrasound nonsense, etc, by saying that it all violates their religious rights. Because it reinforces the idea that women have a right to bodily autonomy that shouldn't be based on anyone else's religious beliefs, but on science and her own damn decisions, which she is capable of making.

- Ruby_de_la_BoobyAnna Merlan
12/03/15 5:51pm

When I had my abortion (in NC), I had to sit in a group "therapy" circle and discuss the process and what forms of birth control I planned on using post-abortion.

"So Cleetus. How do you plan on keeping your gun out of the hands of your toddler, Brytny?"

"By leaving it in my sock drawer?"

"No gun for you, Cleetus."

- LittleQueenTrashMouthRuby_de_la_Booby
12/03/15 5:56pm

Holy shit. I am so sorry you had to go through that.

- Still-Celia loves Milton's Burled CockRuby_de_la_Booby
12/03/15 5:58pm

I am so sorry you had to participate in that hot bullshit,

- sybannRuby_de_la_Booby
12/03/15 5:59pm

ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME!? How can that even be a legal requirement? Fuck these old white men so fucking hard with a rusty chain saw. I hope they all come back as women in Saudi Arabia. Lower class women.

- LostAnotherBurnerPasswordRuby_de_la_Booby
12/03/15 6:02pm

That seems pretty terrible, and sounds like it might be the most sullen group therapy session ever.

- JennyJazzAnna Merlan
12/03/15 5:21pm

Yes! I sent this tip. As someone who knows Stacey Newman personally, I can attest that she is one of the most kick-ass women I have ever met. She is always fighting the good fight for women in Missouri, and is someone we can all be proud of. Plus, she's super nice, smart, and funny.

- MaryTylerMoore'sHairFlipJennyJazz
12/03/15 5:45pm

This is going to piss off so many people. Oh God! It's beautiful.

- Rapunzel's Frying PanMaryTylerMoore'sHairFlip
12/03/15 5:48pm

I know. I'm so excited for the crusty old white men and their anger. It gives me life.

BRING IT ON.

- MayotonillaJennyJazz
12/03/15 5:49pm

Is there anything we can do to not let this bill die? I don't live in MO but I would donate or something.

- PitzerGrimmaceJennyJazz
12/03/15 5:50pm

Well, then all the love goes to Stacey Newman, and all the stars go to you for telling us a little about her. What she has done is not only brilliant as a move to throw this into the laps of all of those who hate women, and choice, but in practice it is absolutely reasonable. Gun ownership should be difficult and a pain in the ass.

- LibraryanneagainAnna Merlan
12/03/15 5:23pm

Now we just need to workshop a transvaginal ultrasound equivalent. Transrectal firearm fitting?

- sybannLibraryanneagain
12/03/15 5:57pm

SAME

- SqarrLibraryanneagain
12/03/15 10:22pm

"You're only allowed to own as much ammo as can fit in your rectal cavity. A colonoscopy will be performed to determine the carrying capacity of your large

intestine.”

- Witch HoggleAnna Merlan
12/03/15 5:14pm



- fondue process, but you can call me princess i guessWitch Hoggle
12/03/15 5:46pm

so many yaaassss



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Half-Mile Spider Web Blankets Tennessee Suburb

discovery.com

posted: 11/23/15

by: Discovery.com Staff

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in North Memphis, Tennessee — except this blanket of white isn't freshly fallen snow, but a massive spider web that has residents worried.

According to experts, the spiders' presence is actually a good thing.

"It's a mass dispersal of the millions of tiny spiders that have always been in that field, unnoticed till now," Memphis Zoo curator Steve Reichling told local news station WMC-TV.

"In fields and meadows, there are often literally millions of spiders doing their thing, unseen and unappreciated by us. I would not want to live in a world where such things were no longer possible. The presence of these spiders tells us that all is well with nature at that location."

Related: Grab an Umbrella, It's Raining Spiders in Australia

Reichling posits that the spiders are likely sheetweb weaver spiders from the Linyphiidae family, which has over 4,300 known species that occur around the world. The small spiders are known to construct messy webs close to the ground. Unlike orb-weaving spiders, which employ sticky silk to capture their prey, the sheet-web weavers prefer to build "tangled networks of silken threads" that entangle prey, according to the University of Kentucky.

Spiders in the Linyphiidae family are also known for their ballooning behavior. The arachnids are able to travel thousands of miles by shooting a silk 'parachute' into the wind. Some ballooning spiders have made it as far as Antarctica.

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Berkeley: Half-naked man crashes car into power pole, causing outage

By Katrina Cameron kcameron@bayareanewsgroup.com Posted: 12/04/2015 07:17:59 AM PST 1 Comment |

Updated: about 18 hours ago

Posted: 12/04/2015 07:17:59 AM PST 1 Comment | Updated: about 18 hours ago

contracostatimes.com

BERKELEY -- A half-naked man crashed into a utility pole in a residential neighborhood, leaving more than 1,000 residents without power, police said.

Police responded to a report of a car crashed into a wooden power pole at 8:37 p.m. Thursday in the 1100 block of Ward Street, said Berkeley police Lt. Dan Montgomery. The pole was knocked down by the car, which also crashed into a couple of parked vehicles.

The suspect fled on foot, but police found the half-naked driver about a block away from the crash and arrested him, Montgomery said. The motorist was a man in his early 20s.

"He stripped off his shorts for some unknown reason," he said.

Montgomery said the man showed signs of intoxication and police are investigating the crash as a possible DUI. The driver was transported to the hospital with minor injuries.

Police taped off Ward Street from Mabel Street to San Pablo while they investigated the crash.

The outage affected residences from Oregon to Park streets and then to Sacramento Street to San Pablo Avenue.

The crash left 1,197 southwest Berkeley residents without power as of 10:09 p.m., said J.D. Guidi, corporate relations representative for PG&E. Crews were on scene as of 11 p.m. and there was no estimate as to when service would be restored.

"We do have personnel in the area that will investigate as quickly and as safely as possible," Guidi said.

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Sunday 29 November 2015

Has the mystery of DB Cooper been solved?

Was the hijacker who leapt from plane with \$200,000 in 1971 a missing grocery store manager? His daughter wants to know



DB Cooper who jumped from a Hijacked plane never to be seen again and right Richard Lepsy who a writer claims may be the same person. DB Cooper who jumped from a Hijacked plane never to be seen again and right Richard Lepsy who a writer claims may be the same person. Photo: FBI/michiganmysteries.com Photo: FBI/michiganmysteries.com

It is 44 years since a man known only as DB Cooper leapt out of a hijacked 727 airliner with a parachute on his back and a bag stuffed with \$200,000 (£132,000) of bank notes.

No trace of him has ever been found.

But now a new theory suggests he may have been a grocery store manager who disappeared before the hijacking.

Lisa Lepsy said she remembered watching news coverage of the audacious airborne heist on television two years after her father, Dick, failed to return from work.

"We were all sitting on the couch watching Walter Cronkite," she told WZZM, a local TV station, referring to the news anchor. "When the composite sketch of DB Cooper came on the TV screen, everyone looked at each other and said, 'That's dad!'"

"We were stunned because the resemblance was unbelievable, and my brothers and I were all sure that was our dad."



In 1980, an 8 year old boy came across three rotting wads of \$20 bills (pictured) bearing serial numbers that matched the ransom money given to DB Cooper along the banks of the Columbia River



The legend of DB Cooper has become the stuff of American Thanksgiving legend.

A man known as Dan Cooper boarded Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 305 in Portland, Oregon, bound for Seattle, Washington, on November 24, 1971.



DB cooper in an FBI handout

During the flight he ordered a glass of bourbon before asking a flight attendant to write a note: 'I HAVE A BOMB IN MY BRIEFCASE. I WILL USE IT IF NECESSARY. I WANT YOU TO SIT NEXT TO ME. YOU ARE BING (sic) HIJACKED.'

When the plane was being refuelled at Tacoma International Airport, he allowed its 36 passengers to disembark and received four parachutes and \$200,000 in return.

The plane, a 727 with a rear door and steps, was allowed to take off. Somewhere between Seattle and Reno, Cooper tied the bag of cash to his body and leapt from the back of the plane in stormy weather.

No trace of him was ever found, giving him the distinction of carrying out the only successful hijacking in American aviation history.



After stealing \$200,000 in cash DB Cooper jumped from the plane

Many suspect he died on the descent. That theory was strengthened in 1980 when an 8-year-old boy stumble open three wads of rotting \$20 bills with serial numbers matching the cash given to Cooper.



Evidence left behind by DB Cooper similar to the one Lisa Lepsy claims her father Richard wore.

However, his body was never found leading to countless theories about who he was and what might have happened.

Ross Richardson, who has taken up the case, says there is plenty of evidence to suggest that Lepsy was Cooper.

"The FBI says the skyjacker spoke with no discernible accent, and they believe he was from the Midwest; Dick Lepsy grew up in Chicago before he moved to Grayling," he said.

"The FBI says the skyjacker left behind a black tie and a tie clasp on the plane; it's the exact same tie that was mandatory neck wear for all Glen's Market employees.

"The FBI says the skyjacker's shoes were loafers; those



Still Missing by Ross Richardson

were Dick Lepsy's favorite shoes."



Richard Lepsy

The 33-year-old father-of-four disappeared in 1969 after going to work at Glen's Market. His car was discovered a few days later at a nearby airport. The keys were still in the ignition.

• A history of the world's biggest heists, in pictures

One way to test the theory would be to use DNA recovered from the rotting bank notes.

"By putting this story out there, we may be able to get the clues we need to solve not one but two mysteries," said Mr Richardson, the author of *Still Missing*. "I

hope the FBI looks into this, starting by running tests on the DNA samples that have been submitted by Lisa.

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'He pooed for love'

stuff.co.nz

Malaysian envoy defecated outside woman's house - Crown

Last updated 11:36, December 4 2015

Former Malaysian diplomatic employee Muhammad Rizalman bin Ismail, 38, arrives at the High Court for his disputed facts hearing in Wellington this morning.

A Malaysian military man believed in black magic, including a spell that meant if he defecated outside a woman's house she would fall in love with him, a court has heard.

Crown prosecutor Grant Burston began cross examining Muhammad Rizalman bin Ismail, 39, at the High Court in Wellington in a disputed facts hearing on Friday.

Rizalman had changed his plea on the morning of his trial on Monday on one charge of indecently assaulting Tania Billingsley on May 10, 2014 following the attack in her home in the Wellington suburb of Brooklyn.



DAVID WHITE/FAIRFAX NZ Former military attache with the Malaysian High Commission in Wellington, Muhammad Rizalman.

Burston said: "It was the reason you took off your belt and lowered your trousers and underpants outside this young woman's front door on the patio.

"It was more about black magic than about having to go to the toilet in an emergency."

Rizalman said no, but admitted he believed in black magic and that a superior

officer had put a spell on him.

Burston also asked about Rizalman about going into Cosmic Corner on Cuba St on May 2, and buying synthetic cannabis.

Rizalman admitted he had but would not admit he had used it.

He said he could not remember asking two women working there if they had boyfriends or wanting to go for a drink.

Burston asked him if he remembered one of the women asking him to leave her alone, and a male staff member having to usher him from the shop.

Rizalman said he did not.

The crown prosecutor then asked him about going to Mermaids bar in Courtenay Place twice when he felt under pressure.

Rizalman said he went to listen to music and release tension.

Another woman was followed by him in a car after she saw him staring at her through a shop window, only the day before he went to Billingsley's home.

Rizalman denied wanting to have sex with the shop assistants or the girls at Mermaids.

He left New Zealand without facing trial after Malaysia invoked diplomatic immunity, in the belief it did so with the blessing of the New Zealand Government.

He returned to New Zealand escorted by police after extradition hearings were filed in Malaysia.

At the time of the attack he had been working at the Malaysian High Commission as a staff assistant to the Malaysian defence advisor.

Alleged victim Tania Billingsley waived her right to name suppression before a district court judge

Two other charges, of assault with intent to commit sexual violation and burglary, were discharged by Justice David Collins.

POSTING

Rizalman begun outlining his life, joining the Malaysian Armed Forces in 1994 and taking his first overseas posting to the Malaysian High Commission in Wellington in 2013.

He said he was married with three children. His job had been a staff assistant to the defence advisor.

A Crown summary of facts said Billingsley had been home alone watching a movie in her bedroom. Rizalman took off his trousers and underwear before going into the house through the closed but unlocked front door.

In the kitchen he then took off his jacket as well before knocking on her partially open bedroom door and pushing it open.

He asked her if he could come in.

Billingsley looked up and saw him wearing only a shirt and naked from the waist down. She screamed at him to leave. Rizalman put his hands on her shoulders but she managed to push him into the living room then out of the flat before locking him out.

She then locked herself in the bathroom and called police. A flatmate's boyfriend arrived

home and challenged Rizalman who was still outside the front door.

Rizalman began walking away but was stopped down the road by the police.

Crown prosecutor Grant Burston is to begin cross examining Rizalman shortly.

HOW THE SAGA UNFOLDED

2014

May 9: Rizalman follows Tania Billingsley from a shop to her home. After a struggle in the house he is arrested by police down the road.

May 10: Rizalman appears in court and his diplomatic status is considered.

Foreign Minister Murray McCully is informed but Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade boss John Allen is left out of the loop.

May 12: An informal discussion between officials from Mfat and the Malaysian High Commission leads to Malaysia concluding that New Zealand "offered" an alternative option for Rizalman to be sent back to Malaysia to face charges.

May 21: Malaysian High Commission tells Mfat it will not waive Rizalman's immunity and asks for all charges to be dropped and all documents to be "sealed".

May 22: Rizalman leaves New Zealand and returns to Malaysia. He is hospitalised for psychiatric evaluation.

June 27: McCully hears for the first time that the Malaysians rejected the request for a waiver. Allen hears about the case for the first time.

June 29: The media reports that a diplomat has claimed immunity and left the country. Malaysian media soon report he was one of their diplomats.

June 30: Prime Minister John Key and McCully are adamant that New Zealand clearly opposed Rizalman leaving and wanted him tried, but on legal advice say they can't name him or the country. Malaysian High Commissioner called in for grilling by Allen; she reveals "ambiguity".

July 1: Fairfax Media lawyers succeed in getting court-ordered name suppression lifted so that Rizalman and the country he represents can be named in New Zealand. McCully releases May 10 and May 21 documents showing New Zealand's unambiguous request for a waiver, and Malaysia's refusal. Hours later McCully concedes informal discussions may have created the "ambiguity" about New Zealand's position. He says Malaysia acted in good faith.

July 2: McCully apologises to Key and Allen apologises to McCully but they both refuse to say if resignations were offered. Allen announces an independent review of Mfat's handling of the event. McCully also reveals that a junior staffer in his office was informed about Malaysia

invoking diplomatic immunity but never opened the email.

July 9: A district court judge accepts Billingsley's application for her name suppression to be removed and she speaks to the media.

October: A formal request to extradite Rizalman to New Zealand is made. Rizalman waives the need for a formal extradition and agrees to return.

October 25: Rizalman returns to New Zealand and immediately faces a district court.

2015

November 27: A High Court judge is told the trial does not need to go ahead as Rizalman will plead to one of the charges.

November 30: Rizalman pleads guilty to indecent assault and is remanded for further court hearings.



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via

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He Sees You When You're Sleeping

November 9, 2013

wordpress.com



Image

He's gonna find out who's naughty or nice.

In Santa's earlier incarnation, the jolly old elf brought something just as good as presents to your house. He brought along a demonic sidekick, Krampus.

Krampus carries with him a sack, to stuff naughty little children like *you* into, as well as the original rod of punishment. The rod is hazel wood and is believed to hold magical properties — it can ward off evil spirits, the Devil and protect one from lightning. There is even a legend associated with Mary and the infant Jesus taking refuge under a hazel bush during a violent thunder storm. Other legends depict witches beating lakes with a hazel rod in an effort to create thunder clouds, which materialize overhead and do their bidding.



Image

The hazel rod was considered the great rod of life. With this phallic symbol, women and animals were beaten "*with gusto*" in hopes of them becoming fertile. It was also considered a wishing rod, used to find hidden treasure. Sometimes, a human countenance would be carved upon it. Indeed, it looks just as disturbing as it sounds.

In some countries, males don Krampus costumes and run wild through the streets whipping and punishing anyone and everyone

they come across. While in Austria and Bavaria he roams the streets frightening children with rusty chains and bells.



Image

Finally, on the night of St. Nicholas Eve, it's Junior Judgement Day! Children polish their shoes, a representation of the soul, and set them on the hearth, along with a treat for St. Nicholas' horse, or reindeer, depending on the country's custom. Nicholas enters and fills the shoes with small gifts, perhaps a little orange, a golden walnut and a honey cake and reads aloud from his golden book, all of the child's good deeds from the past year. However, if you were bad, Krampus is given leave to beat you, mercilessly, shove you in his sack and carry you promptly to Hell.



Image

He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness' sake!

1. **cos**December 5, 2013 at 6:14 pm

This is a great story! I remember it. Had fun reading it but much better listening to you. :P

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Travelled to the world's most evil places: WW2 car owned by Heinrich Himmler goes on sale

[express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk)

A CAR that travelled to the world's most evil places with one of history's biggest mass killers aboard is going up for sale.

By Allan Hall

PUBLISHED: 08:30, Wed, Dec 9, 2015 | UPDATED: 08:46, Wed, Dec 9, 2015



IG

But just WHO would want to run around in the WW2 vehicle used by Nazism's S.S. chief Heinrich Himmler which took him to the death camps of Auschwitz and Majdanek and the killing fields of Russia?

The Wanderer W11/1 was the service vehicle of Himmler that he used for much of the war to oversee the genocide of the Jews, gypsies, communists and other foes of the Third Reich.

He was pictured in it at Auschwitz, the premier extermination camp where over a million people were liquidated.



GETTY

At war's end, knowing that he would hang for his terrible crimes, Himmler set off on foot with a band of brigands to hike across Germany in the uniform of a lowly serviceman.

He shaved off his moustache and wandered around with no real goal until he was caught by a British army patrol.

Recognised as being Hitler's top butcher, he bit on a cyanide pill

before he could be interrogated and was dead within a minute.

His body was buried in an unmarked grave on Luneburg Heath.

Now his car is up for sale and for Nazi and militaria enthusiasts, it is a rare treasure.



GETTY

The Wanderer W11/1 appeared on the market for the first time in 1928 with a 2.5-liter six-in-line engine.

In 1933 the W11/1 model like this one was developed for German army use with a three litre engine designed to be an all terrain vehicle.

After the war the Wanderer ended up in a museum in Riga, the capital of Latvia. When

communism collapsed there the vehicle was sold to a private collector in the west.

The company Fantastic Fahrzeuge of Germany is offering it for half a million euros - over 360,000 pounds.

"It will probably go to a fabulously wealthy collector," said one trade observer. "Its historical value is immense - but what a history....."



IG

14 Comments

AliceWalkerNEW11 hours ago

I would love it. Paint Obama's face on the doors.

jmy67NEW14 hours ago

"designed to be an all terrain vehicle" -- Good writing there

Cannon Street KidNEW18 hours ago

Whilst I am not a royalist I have no axe to grind with the royal family but my mate who hates them all reckons that this will probably be bought by HRH as her primary mode of transport.

hardyNEW14 hours ago

your mate is a prat..

BarnabyNEW20 hours ago

The DE is obviously unaware just how many people wake up with their eyes open nowadays and are fully aware of the inconsistencies in the official history from that period in time.

Miss Floribunda RoseNEW18 hours ago

You mean like the bombing of Dresden, for example, which never actually occurred? I see what you mean.....

BarnabyNEW17 hours ago

I think you are just a wind up merchant Ms Rose. Captured in North Africa, my father was a prisoner for most of WWII and spent the last couple of years in Dresden, in the rail yards.

They did bomb Dresden you can be assured of that and my father was a reliable witness to the fact. It's a pity they have always struggled to find reliable witnesses to most of the other accounts we have been deceived with all our lives.

Miss Floribunda RoseNEW16 hours ago

Other accounts of what, exactly? Please be specific.

hardyNEW14 hours ago

or coventry, southampton. london portsmouth etc etc

Mr.MonoxideNEW21 hours ago

Staff car for Merkel and Camoron to tour the wreckage of Europe in.

RussellNEW16 hours ago

Pity they ain't got the guts to take cyanide

New CrusaderNEW21 hours ago

If i win the lotto i will buy that car and drive it through Bradford !

LostDemocracyNEW21 hours ago

And I will drive around Rotherham.

DavidMNEW19 hours ago

Hope you have a machine gun on it.

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Hidden portrait 'found under Mona Lisa', says French scientist - BBC News bbc.com

By Roya Nikkhah BBC News

• 4 hours ago

An image of a portrait underneath the Mona Lisa has been found beneath the existing painting using reflective light technology, according to a French scientist.

Pascal Cotte said he has spent more than 10 years using the technology to analyse the painting.

He claims the earlier portrait lies hidden underneath the surface of Leonardo's most celebrated artwork.

A reconstruction shows another image of a sitter looking off to the side.

The Louvre Museum has declined to comment on his claims.

Instead of the famous, direct gaze of the painting which hangs in the Louvre Museum in Paris, the image of the sitter also shows no trace of her enigmatic smile, which has intrigued art lovers for more than 500 years.

But Mr Cotte's claims are controversial and have divided opinion among Leonardo experts.

The scientist, who is the co-founder of Lumiere Technology in Paris, was given access to the painting in 2004 by the Louvre.

He has pioneered a technique called Layer Amplification Method (LAM), which he used to analyse the Mona Lisa.



Light technology was used on the famous painting

Image copyright Courtesy
Brinkworth Films
Image caption

It works by "projecting a series of intense lights" on to the painting, Mr Cotte said. A camera then takes measurements of the lights' reflections and from those measurements, Mr Cotte said he is able to reconstruct what has happened between the layers of the paint.

The Mona Lisa has been the subject of several scientific

examinations over more than half a century. More recent techniques include infrared inspections and multi-spectral scanning.

But Mr Cotte has claimed his technique is able to penetrate more deeply into the painting.

He said: "We can now analyse exactly what is happening inside the layers of the paint and we can peel like an onion all the layers of the painting. We can reconstruct all the chronology of the creation of the painting."

'Shatter many myths'

Leonardo is believed to have worked on the painting between 1503 and 1517 while working in Florence and later in France.

There has long been debate about the Mona Lisa's identity. But for centuries, it has been widely believed that she is Lisa Gherardini, the wife of a Florentine silk merchant.

But Mr Cotte has claimed his discoveries challenge that theory. He believes the image he has reconstructed underneath the surface of the painting is Leonardo's original Lisa, and that the portrait named Mona Lisa for more than 500 years is, in fact, a different woman.

He said: "The results shatter many myths and alter our vision of Leonardo's masterpiece forever.

"When I finished the reconstruction of Lisa Gherardini, I was in front of the portrait and she is totally different to Mona Lisa today. This is not the same woman."

He also claims to have found two more images under the surface of the painting - a shadowy outline of a portrait with a larger head and nose, bigger hands but smaller lips. And he says he has found another Madonna-style image with Leonardo's etchings of a pearl headdress.

'Mona Lisa is Lisa'

But Martin Kemp, Emeritus Professor of the History of Art at the University of Oxford, is not convinced.

Professor Kemp said: "They [Cotte's images] are ingenious in showing what Leonardo may have been thinking about. But the idea that there is that picture as it were hiding underneath the surface is untenable.

"I do not think there are these discreet stages which represent different portraits. I see it as more or less a continuous process of evolution. I am absolutely convinced that the Mona Lisa is Lisa. "

Art historian Andrew Graham-Dixon has made a new BBC documentary called *The Secrets of the Mona Lisa*, studying historical documents linked to the painting alongside Mr Cotte's scientific findings.

Mr Graham-Dixon said: "I have no doubt that this is definitely one of the stories of the century.

"There will probably be some reluctance on the part of the authorities at the Louvre in changing the title of the painting because that's what we're talking about - it's goodbye Mona Lisa, she is somebody else."

The Secrets of the Mona Lisa is on BBC Two at 21:00 GMT on 9 December.

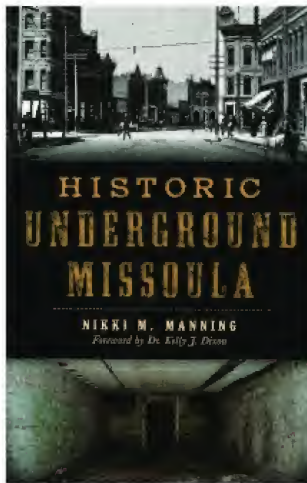
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Image copyright Courtesy Brinkworth Films

Nikki Manning | Historic Underground Missoula | Lively Times livelytimes.com

Underground curiosities come to light in this fascinating investigation

Books & Writers Nov 20, 2015



*Find out what lies under
Missoula's streets*

Author and anthropologist Nikki Manning began researching what lies under Missoula's streets when she chose the topic for her master's thesis at The University of Montana.

The goal of the Missoula Historic Underground Project (MHUP) was to validate "the stories of 'Chinese Tunnels' and underground activity by the Chinese" through carefully executed research. Could the investigation prove the existence of underground brothels, opium dens, liquor caches during Prohibition, secret doors for illegal deliveries, tunnels to avoid being seen above ground, and more?

The work plan narrowed the research to eight sites, and became a multi-class collaboration between the UM Department of Anthropology and the Missoula Historic Preservation Commission.

Steam tunnels, crawl spaces, damp basements with sealed-off doors, tiny closets with no clue as to their function, and more curiosities came to light through this fascinating investigation.

Drawings and photographs throughout the book illustrate the progress, which the author tells us is by no means done.

Manning completed a master's degree in anthropology with a concentration in cultural heritage and urban archaeology. She serves on the boards of Preserve Historic Missoula and The Missoula Historic Preservation Commission.

Visit historypress.net for more information on this book and other historical offerings.

– Judy Shafter

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Homeowner puts poop in box to deter package thieves

ktnv.com

Katherine Jarvis

8:06 AM, Dec 11, 2015

12:36 PM, Dec 11, 2015



Las Vegas, NV (KTNV) - A valley homeowner is fighting back against package thieves with poop.

A viewer sent in a video of a box being snatched from his front door. But the homeowner told Action News the box was full of dog poop.

The man had just moved to the neighborhood and wanted

to see if package thieves lived nearby so he conducted an experiment. After seeing the video, he said he will tighten up his home security.

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Object of Intrigue: How a Red Army General Inspired 'White' Coca-Cola

atlasobscura.com

by Ella Morton / 08 Dec 2015

Though little recognized in the West, Red Army leader Georgy Zhukov played a central role in the vanquishing of the Nazi regime. The most decorated general officer in Russian history, he pushed the German army from Stalingrad all the way back to Berlin, where, after a two week battle, Nazi Germany was kaput.

But there was one powerful force to which Zhukov could not help but yield: the sweet, sweet taste of ice-cold Coca-Cola.

Post-war, Zhukov was introduced to the effervescent pleasures of the American drink via General Eisenhower in Germany. Zhukov was an immediate fan, but there was a problem: with the U.S. and the USSR—former allies—finally facing up to the true extent of their ideological differences, Zhukov couldn't be seen chugging down a capitalist Coke.

During World War II, Coca-Cola worked to make itself synonymous with American values and patriotism. Thanks to the company's savvy soldier-focused marketing—and a resulting exemption from the sugar ration—cracking open a bottle became a way for G.I.'s to get a fizzy taste of home when hunkered down in Europe. To ensure American soldiers posted around the world never went without their favorite refreshing drink, Coke even established 64 special troop-targeted bottling plants within easy reach of the conflict zones in Europe and the Pacific.

To drink Coca-Cola was to say yes to all that America stood for. Therefore, if you were a figure of Communist triumph like General Zhukov, you couldn't very well fight in the Cold War with a cold Coke in your hand. But the savvy Soviet leader managed to find a way around this clash: White Coke.



Georgy Zhukov speaking on a subject other than Coke in 1941.
(Photo: RIA Novosti)

According to Mark Pendergrast, author of *For God, Country and Coca-Cola*, Zhukov was so enamored with the drink that he approached the Coca-Cola Company to ask for a clear version of it so he could sip it surreptitiously. A chemist at Coca-Cola reportedly complied by removing caramel from the formula, which made the liquid transparent. Packaging also had to be addressed—in place of the instantly identifiable curvaceous glass bottle, Coca-Cola supplied a clear bottle with straight sides, a white cap, and even a red star, for that extra Soviet-friendly touch.

While the creation of a drink targeted at a market of one Soviet man may seem like a waste of time for Coke, the venture had great benefits for the company. As Pendergrast notes in his book, standard brown Coke had to pass through a Russian-

archive/Wikipedia) Georgy Zhukov speaking on a subject other than Coke in 1941. (Photo: RIA Novosti archive/Wikipedia)

controlled part of Austria in order to reach a bottling plant in Vienna, which was jointly administered by the USA, the UK, France and the Soviet Union. With Zhukov on their side, Coke found that its delivery trucks passed through the Russian zone swiftly, in contrast to the weeks of bureaucracy others had to endure.

White Coke, created in a small batch especially for Zhukov, was never released more widely. But to those who grew up in the early '90s, the drink may sound familiar. For a brief, dazzling time back then, clear cola was a big thing. Crystal Pepsi, a colorless version of the standard brown soda, made a triumphant debut via a puzzling, Van Halen-soundtracked Super Bowl ad in 1992. A few months later, Coca-Cola launched Tab Clear, a transparent diet soft drink. Despite a strong debut, both beverages tanked and were pulled from the market within two years.

Recent nostalgia-fueled efforts to revive Crystal Pepsi may yet see results, but overall, clear cola seems an unappealing proposition to consumers—in contrast to General Zhukov, who apparently couldn't get enough of the stuff.

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Rio 2016: How the Olympic host city looks with 36 weeks to go

13:29 PM

news.com.au

December 13, 2015 6:05am



Graffiti attacking Rio's mayor is still visible around the Olympic Park.

ANY passenger waiting in the permanently gridlocked traffic at the entrance to Rio de Janeiro's Olympic Park will notice the graffiti spray-painted on bulldozed homes along the road. "Not everyone has a price ... so how are you going to buy the ones who don't?"

It's too late for that sort of thinking now. The houses are mostly flattened, venues are

slowly taking shape and \$14 billion of public money has been ringfenced for new infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Brazil is in the grip of its worst recession in 35 years, its currency, the real, has halved in value and it is facing the imminent impeachment of its president. The country desperately needs next year's Games to succeed, but the sporting event's track record for benefiting a host nation is dismal.

Here's how Rio looks with 36 weeks to go.

STADIUM ROCK

Unlike previous Olympic Games, Rio's events will not be based in one place but in four sites around the city, allowing it to spend the funding on accelerating desperately needed transport improvements. The move could be genius or disaster.

The Olympic Park in Barra da Tijuca will be the heart of the Games, but it's more than an hour's journey from the action at the "party zone" of Copacabana, an hour in another direction from the whitewater rafting and BMXing at Deodoro, and another hour from Maracana, where football finals and the opening ceremony will take place. It threatens to be chaos.

There are nine stadiums in Barra, paid for with \$4.9bn of public and private money, on top of the \$14bn of public funds being spent on the city. Organisers say 60 per cent of the buildings are temporary, with the Future Arena due to be dismantled and turned into three schools and the swimming centre becoming two public pools.

A National Centre for High Performance Athletes will remain, although it is yet to be seen if Brazilians will step up their sporting range to benefit from the facility. At present, the nation

mainly just cares about football, and the World Cup didn't prove a goldmine, with one stadium now used as a parking garage for buses.



The construction work has a long way to go, but the builders are confident. Picture: Gustavo Wittich



The Future Arena, right, will be turned into three schools after the Games. Picture: Gustavo Wittich



The swimming stadium will house two public pools.

benefit everyone, but he was unable to name specific projects that would help the poor, bar a

GOING NOWHERE

Many visitors next year may find themselves staying on the fringes of Rio, since a lack of hotels will leave an accommodation shortfall, even after the Olympics' partnership with Airbnb provided 80,000 extra beds.

With the city's roads in a state of crisis, new train lines, high-speed bus lanes and an \$11.8bn subway sound like a godsend. But will it be enough?

A recent hike of bus prices has hit the poor harder than anyone, as the recession sends unemployment into double figures. The steep cost of building and travelling on these transport links could leave many citizens unable to afford to go anywhere after the Games are over. A metro line to Barra da Tijuca, a flashy American-style neighbourhood, may hardly affect those on the wrong side of Rio's dramatic wealth divide.

With the subway due in May, three months before the Games, the city will be praying it's ready in time and on budget. It's a big ask.

PUBLIC OPINION

Speak to most people in Rio about the Olympics and you get an ambivalent reaction. Elder "Sassa" Chagas, a football coach in the Complexo de Peinha slum, told news.com.au he "didn't know anything" about the Olympics, and had seen "no benefit" from the World Cup before that. He still hoped his kids could be involved, but had had no indication of any opportunities from the organisers.

Olympic organising committee spokesman

Mario Andrada insists the Games need to



Everyone is hoping the costly exercise will benefit the recession-hit city.

school program for teaching children “Olympic values” and helping them build their own sports equipment. It’s unclear how many kids that will reach — certainly not the most vulnerable, who don’t go to school.

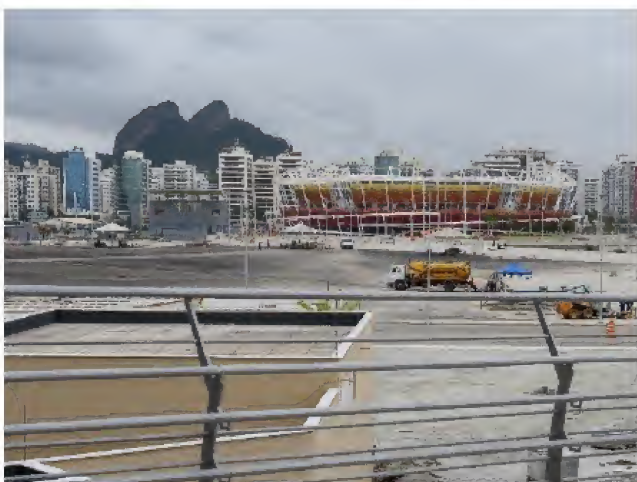
Richard Fine, a British trustee for Task Brazil whose wife is Brazilian, told news.com.au that given the problems in the country, the government could have focused spending on areas such as housing instead. “There are a lot of issues in Brazil,” he said. “The Olympics will come and go like the World Cup and the problems will remain, issues with safety, the economy not doing well, political questions,

there’s hardly any welfare state.

“Hamburg voted against the Olympics, there was a lot of scepticism about London and Sydney. In London it made no difference before and after. We can cope, but Rio simply can’t. The reality is, does Brazil really need a wonderful Olympic swimming plaza? It’s not an athletics-loving country.”

Brazilians readily describe their government as corrupt. “God of Janeiro, in the mud” and “removal of ethics” reads the graffiti around the Olympic Park protesting the loss of homes. Demonstrations are a regular occurrence and radical organisations have sprung up across Brazil.

As for tickets, just over half of the 5.2 million allocated to Brazilian people have been sold. The organisers say 62 per cent of the nation is in favour of the Games. If that’s true, we can only assume the rest of the 200 million-strong population is waiting until the last minute to snap up the already low-cost tickets.



The existing tennis centre (in red and yellow) and the Olympic village accommodation for athletes rise up what will be the main spectator hub, now a barren wasteland.

BRAZILIAN LEGACY

Everyone knows the most important word during an Olympics bid is “legacy”. There are the economic benefits, which Nike has optimistically estimated at \$125bn, the sporting benefits of having new venues and the environmental impact.

The stories about Rio and the environment have mostly been negative, with significant public anger over a state-of-the-art golf course built on a protected spot. The Olympic organising committee insists the animal life is now greater than it was before construction,



Homes being knocked down to make way for Olympic glamour are scrawled with attacks on the government and the Games.

and that 90 per cent of the vegetation has been restored.

As for the fact that golf is far from a popular Brazilian sport, the organisers insist the impressive public course will attract more tourism to Rio.

There has also been recent controversy over serious water pollution in areas where athletes will compete, with raw sewage pumped into Guanabara Bay. Andrada insists that the fact the amount of treated sewage has reached 50 per cent is a positive, although the target was 80.

Even Andrada admits the country is facing “a perfect storm” of social issues and corruption. “It must and it does affect the games in every respect,” he said. He believes the human legacy will be a huge increase in Brazil’s self-confidence as well as a boost to the hospitality industry.

The Games will create a welcome 90,000 jobs, he says, although the long-term employment gain is still up for debate.

“The Olympics is a big opportunity for Brazil to showcase itself to the world,” Fine said. “It needs to be used to their advantage, it should massively increase tourism or it’s a wasted opportunity.

“A lot could still be done to improve the lives of Brazilians for the future, engaging with those who need it the most. There’s big responsibility on all of us, to say it’s all down to Brazil is narrow-minded. If the swimming community could take a few kids and train them it would be wonderful. What better opportunity than to use the Olympics as a vehicle for change?”

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How to make honey infused corpse medicine

strangerremains.com

By strangerremainson November 29, 2015



An artistic impression of mellified man. Image from Wikipedia.

Corpse medicine was a type of remedy produced with the bones, organs, and blood from dead bodies. It is mentioned in ancient medical texts and histories from Greece, China, Mesopotamia, and India. One of the more peculiar accounts of corpse medicine comes from the 16th century *Chinese materia medica*, also known as the *Bencao gangmu*, written by Li-Shih-chen.

In the *Bencao gangmu*, Li-Shih-chen describes an ancient Arabic recipe to make a medicine called “mellified man.” To make “mellified man,” an elderly man volunteered to mummify himself from the inside out with honey until he died, then his corpse was placed in a coffin filled with honey. After 100 years, his coffin was opened so his remains were harvested for medicine.

“In Arabia there are men 70 to 80 years old who are willing to give their bodies to save others. The subject does not eat food, he only bathes and partakes of honey. After a month he only excretes honey (the urine and feces are entirely honey) and death follows. His fellow men place him in a stone coffin full of honey in which he macerates. The date is put upon the coffin giving the year and month. After a hundred years the seals are removed. A confection is formed which is used for the treatment of broken and wounded limbs. A small amount taken internally will immediately cure the complaint.” (p. 221 as quoted in *Stiff* by Mary Roach)

Li-Shih-chen states that he does not know if the report of “mellified man” is true, and there is no archaeological proof (that I know of) of the practice. But there is plenty of evidence that corpses were harvested for medicine, honey was used for medicine and embalming, and self-mummification were each practiced separately.

Corpse Medicine

For hundreds of years, cultures from all over the world used corpse medicine to treat all kinds of illnesses and injuries including bruises, coughs, palsy, and vertigo.

English physicians treated Henry VIII with medicines made from mummies and the *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* of 1618 includes preparations made with mummies. So from the 12th to the 18th centuries, mummies were commonly sold in European apothecaries. But the use of mummies in medieval medicine may have been caused by a tragic misinterpretation.

Naturally occurring bitumen, that Persians called mumiya, was used by ancient physicians in medications for all kinds of illnesses. Because Egyptian embalming resins looked similar to bitumen, artificially preserved bodies from Egypt became known as mummies. Historians believe medieval physicians began to use Egyptian mummies in prescriptions because they



Apothecary containers for axungia hominis (human fat), ca. 17th or 18th century. Image from Wikipedia

either mistook the word for naturally occurring bitumen for mummified corpses, or they simply used crushed mummies when naturally occurring bitumen became scarce.

Honey as Medicine and Embalming Fluid

Honey makes a great “natural bandage” that prevents the growth of bacteria because it contains a small amount of hydrogen peroxide, can draw moisture out of wounds, and is extremely acidic. Ancient Sumerians and Egyptians used honey to treat skin diseases and protect wounds from infection.



Painting titled *The Death of Alexander*, by Karl von Piloty 1886. Image from Wikipedia.

The factors that make honey a good treatment for wounds also make it a good embalming material. In *The History*, Herodotus described how the ancient Assyrians embalmed their dead with honey. The body of Alexander the Great (356 B.C.-323 B.C.) was supposedly submerged in a golden sarcophagus filled with honey so that his corpse could be displayed.

Self-Mummification



Luang Phor Daeng Payasilo, the mummified monk, at Wat Khunaram, Ko Samui, southern Thailand. Image from Wikipedia.

Buddhist monks in Japan, Russia, Mongolia, and Thailand practiced ritual self-

mummification, known as Sokushinbutsu, from the 11th-20th centuries. That monk's efforts were respected but his body was not revered. The ritual of self-mummification was a way for monks to defeat suffering and achieve enlightenment through meditation and deprivation.

One of the best-known self-mummification rituals was practiced by the Shingon Buddhists of Japan. This ritual involved years of starvation and dehydration to eliminate moisture and kill the bacteria that hasten decomposition. During the first three years, a monk decreased his body fat by eating only nuts, seeds, and berries, while increasing his physical activity. Towards the end of the ritual, the monk only consumed bark, roots, and stones.

Self-mummification was further aided by drinking toxic herbs and tea made from the urushi tree, also known as the Chinese lacquer tree, which eliminated bodily fluids and killed bacteria.

The monk was placed in the lotus position inside a coffin or a tomb when he was close to death. The monk chanted and rang a bell until he died, and when his fellow monks heard silence, they completely sealed the tomb. After several years, monks exhumed the body to see if the self-mummification ritual was successful. If the body was incorrupt then the corpse was placed in a temple and treated like a holy relic. If the body had decayed, then the corpse was left behind and the tomb was resealed.

1 reply

1. neenasekharcvv

November 29, 2015 • 3:47 am

Its a nice post but i am from India . sure there are many monks who got mummified themselves here but it is mostly believed they are meditating or a state called samadhi . but what i read is new and thank u for the information.

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Human Remains Found At Home Of Missing 7-Year-Old Possibly Eaten By Pigs. Father Held On \$10 Million Bond

inquisitr.com



Arrest photo for father suspected of murdering missing son

December 1, 2015

Human Remains Found At Home Of Missing 7-Year-Old Possibly Eaten By Pigs. Father Held On \$10 Million Bond

Janice Malcolm

A Kansas bail bondsman is being held \$10 million bond after being charged with assaulting his wife and abusing

his missing son on Monday. On Thanksgiving day the gruesome discovery of human remains in the bondsman's shed have led to an in depth investigation.

The courts ordered Michael A. Jones, 44, held on \$10 million bond when he appeared in court for the first time on Monday. The charges against him include child abuse, aggravated battery and aggravated assault with a firearm. District Attorney for Wyandotte County, Jerome A. Gorman told of how police were called in to Jones' home in rural Kansas City, Kansas on Wednesday to investigate a reported domestic disturbance. While at the premises the police were informed that Jones' son, a 7-year-old boy called A.J., had been missing for an extended amount of time.

The neighbour reportedly heard gunshots and this was the reason for the call of domestic disturbance. Jones' 29-year-old wife, Heather Jones was the victim of the abuse. Police had to return another day with a search warrant in order to begin their search for young A.J.. An *AP News* piece had Gorman quoted as saying the child abuse charge being brought against Jones for allegedly "torturing or cruelly beating" his son is just "the tip of the iceberg" in the case involving the young boy. The prosecutor said the case "escalated into a much larger investigation" when after police searched the property they found unidentified human remains in a barn.

The investigating officers have not been able to positively identify the body as that of Jones' 7-year-old son but tests are being run. The police have not commented on the allegations that the human remains were found among pigs, who had taken to eating the body. However, Gorman said the officers present at the finding of the body or those who saw the crime scene have described it as "gruesome."

"Officers who have been out there have described this as one of the worst things that they have ever seen and for officers on the street and detectives to come up and say that this case has made them angry, you can just surmise from that what

kind of scene it must have been.”

Gorman spoke at a news conference and advised that he expects more charges will be filed against Michael Jones later. The \$10 million bond is the highest the District Attorney has ever requested in his 34 years as a prosecutor.

Gorman has six other children that lived with him and his wife on the property, all girls ages two to ten, and neighbours said they hardly ever saw any of the children. Little A.J. and his sisters were reportedly home schooled. Following Jones' arrest and the finding of the human remains believed to be the missing boy A.J. the children have been placed with protective services for an indefinite amount of time. It is still unclear to investigators who the mother of each child is but they know that Jones' current wife is not the mother of the missing boy. Police say that they are trying to locate A.J.'s mother.

Family members have stated that the couple were together for 9 years but they were certain that many instances of physical and emotional abuse was constantly occurring in the household. The brother of Jones' wife, Michael Williams reportedly advised *NBC News* that that there were bullet holes throughout the house. The family's yard was littered with children toys strewn amongst mattresses and old lawn equipment.

An autopsy on the human remains found at the property is expected to take place sometime this week. Investigators are positive they will make identify the body.

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Human Remains Stolen From Cemetery Found In Man's Home, Police Say

huffingtonpost.com

Amador Medina is accused of disinterring the skeletal bodies for use in Santeria rites.

- Nina Golgowski

12/07/2015 03:51 pm ET

Everyone has a few skeletons in the closet, but police say that Amador Medina had five.

The 32-year-old man is in custody after police report he broke into a Worcester, Massachusetts, mausoleum and made off with the skeletal remains, allegedly to practice Santeria.

The remains of three adults and two young children were recovered from Medina's Hartford, Connecticut, apartment on Friday, roughly two months after they were discovered missing from Worcester's Hope Cemetery on Oct. 9.



Hartford Police Department via Associated Press
Amador Medina, 32, is accused of disinterring five bodies in Massachusetts.

Worcester police said the mausoleum's doors had been forced open and the crypt's panels and caskets damaged during the incident. A chain securing the doors was cut.

The alleged body snatcher, who Hartford police said identified himself as a Santeria priest, was linked to the grave robbery thanks to a tip.

"We see [Santeria] rarely in Hartford," the city's deputy police chief Brian Foley told The Associated Press. "When we do, it's generally with animals. Very even more rarely you get human remains." He added that those who practice the Afro-Caribbean religion use the bones for medicinal purposes.

According to a Santeria website, practitioners' religious sacrifices typically involve the blood of animals found on a farm, like chickens and sheep. A number of online sites also list bones for sale for Santeria rituals, including popular sites like eBay.

Google Maps

Police say they recovered stolen skeletal remains inside this Hartford, Connecticut, home.

Investigators said they've tried to find family members of the deceased, but they've been unable to do so. The last person interned in the mausoleum was placed there about 71 years ago, they said.



According to the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, the mausoleum was built in 1903 for Charles Chandler Houghton and his family. Houghton was a successful boot manufacturer and real estate developer in Worcester.

Medina appeared in Hartford Superior Court on Monday and agreed to be taken back to Worcester, where he faces five counts of disinterment of bodies, as well as charges of conspiracy and breaking and entering

with intent to commit a felony.

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World | Wed Nov 25, 2015 1:18pm EST

Related: World

BUDAPEST

A Hungarian detained by police on suspicion of international terrorism links is a World War Two hobbyist who was stopped while driving home with old ammunition he had dug up in a forest, a court said on Wednesday.

The man, identified as by the court as Roland S., was stopped on Saturday along with three friends by the TEK anti-terror police, who found explosives in his car.

The head of the TEK, Janos Hajdu, said police found a bomb-making laboratory in the suspect's home.

Refusing a prosecutor's application for Roland S. to be held in custody, the court said on Wednesday there was no evidence to support the TEK's assertion that he or the three others had terrorism links or were plotting to kill anyone.

"The circumstances of the case point to the opposite. There is no data of extremist views or - beyond the fact that two of his friends are ethnic Hungarians from Slovakia - international ties either," it said.

The main suspect, who had no criminal record, "lives with his mother and his stepfather and is a World War II hobbyist."

He had used a metal detector in a forest in western Hungary to find items including armor-piercing shells, grenades, bullets and a sack filled with gunpowder, and tried to take them home, the court heard.

TEK deputy director Zsolt Bodnar told Reuters on Wednesday the apartment lab contained tools to dismantle explosive devices and chemicals, and could be used make concealed explosives.

He said the four suspects were found as police stepped up investigations to ensure Hungarian officials entitled to "top protection" were safe, in the wake of the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris.

All four remain under investigation for unlicensed possession of equipment capable of making explosives.

Bodnar added that, in a separate case, two Hungarians were detained on Saturday because of information that had shown they were plotting violent action in Budapest.

A police video showed live ammunition and weapons that the TEK said belonged to the pair.

(Reporting by Budapest newsroom; editing by John Stonestreet)

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• 24 November 2015



The moonbow appeared just before 21:00 local time

Image copyrightVidir Bjornsson/[@vidirb](#)
Image caption

A rare lunar rainbow - or "moonbow" - has been spotted in the night sky over western Iceland.

It was caught on camera near the small town of Stykkisholmur on Sunday evening by keen photographer Vidir Bjornsson.

"I was driving in heavy rain and so much wind and I just stopped the car because I could not believe what I was seeing," Mr Bjornsson tells the BBC. "First I thought I was just seeing some reflection from the window of my car, but then me and my friend who was driving decided to stop and try to get a picture of it." A second moonbow was also visible at the time, although it is hard to make out in the photograph.

Lunar rainbows are formed when moonlight, rather than direct sunlight, is refracted by moisture in the atmosphere. They are much harder to see than the daytime versions because moonlight is so much fainter, meaning they often look white to the naked eye, although the colours emerge in long-exposure photographs, Visir's Iceland Magazine website explains.

The combination of conditions required for a lunar rainbow to appear makes it a rare sight, even in the dark skies of Iceland. "I have never seen this before," Mr Bjornsson says, adding that he had "never heard of a moonbow" until now.

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eesti keeles
old estonian religions
Ahto Kaasik

Estonia's religious landscape is unique and differs clearly from that of Christian countries. According to the 2000 census, only 25% of Estonia's population claim any religion at all and belong to some religious association. Thus Estonians could be said to be a secular people.

The secularism of Estonians has its basis in history. The Christianisation of Estonia in the 13th century took place at the hands of the Teutonic Order and as a result of the brutal military expansion of the Danish kingdom. Estonians suffered great casualties. For centuries the knowledge that Christianity had been brought to Estonia by fire and sword became embedded in the psyche of the people.

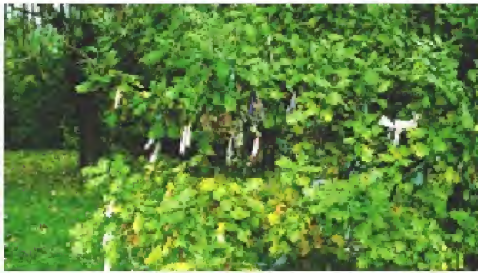
During the following centuries the occupiers suppressed the beliefs and traditions of the people by clerical, administrative and military means. Despite this nature-worship was still quite vigorous at the end of the 19th century. All over the country there were sacred groves, stones, springs and trees where people went to sacrifice and pray in secret.

The traditional and also religious viewpoint of Estonian's is nature oriented and pragmatic. Therefore, Estonians are fairly sceptical towards spiritual teachings, which do not originate from empirical reality. Christian teaching is based in a different reality (forgiveness of sin, redemption, life hereafter, heaven and hell). It is obvious that the two tenets do not have much in common. Among the small religious minority of Estonia's population the followers of the two indigenous religions are an even smaller minority. According to the 2000 census there are 1058 followers of Taarausk and Maausk. Nevertheless, both of these enjoy a wider popularity among the population as, according to a survey done in 2002, eleven percent of Estonia's population claim that out of all the religions they have the warmest feelings towards *Taarausk* and *Maausk*.

***Taarausk* (Taaraism)**

In 1928, ten years after Estonia gained independence, a group of intellectuals gathered to create Estonia's own religion. They believed that national independence is but the means of attaining and protecting spiritual independence. The nation's spirituality and culture cannot be founded on a foreign religion like Christianity. They believed that a religion must not be dogmatic, but must develop with the people, and must be in accord with the latest developments in science. They shared the then generally accepted attitude about cultural imperialism that certain people and certain religions are more developed than others. A theory was propagated, which stated that developed societies have more sophisticated gods than primitive societies.

ahto kaasik "sacred tree"



Ahto Kaasik. Sacred Tree

The members of this group had been educated in German and Russian universities and they were sceptical of Christianity, but at the same time uneasy with traditional Estonian culture. They believed that during the hundreds of years of occupation Estonian indigenous religion had been destroyed, and that only barbaric remnants of it remained. For instance, they preferred the Christian choral songs of foreign origin to the runo songs of the Baltic Finns, and instead of traditional customs they favoured modern rituals with national romantic scenarios. The new religion needed new terminology. Terms like *asko* (from the word *askus* - charm or spell) and *hiislar* (from the word *hiis* - sacred grove, sacred place) were created to denote the clergy. The religious symbol in the form of a medallion was called a *tõlet*, derived from three words *tõde* - truth, *elu* - life, and *tee* - way. The badge itself is a tiny silver medallion with wavy edges, in the middle is depicted a road with a golden flame on it. From among the Estonian spirits and gods, one was picked out - Taara - and a new national and monotheistic religion was born.

The religious practice of the Taaraists was meagre. With rituals comprised of song, incantation and zither playing, new members were accepted into the congregation, marriages celebrated, funeral rites for the departed performed and other solemn occasions observed. As the god of the religion was equated with the absolute it was deemed senseless to pray to him.* Belief in oneself was deemed more important as expressed in one of the principal incantations of taaraism: *"I believe in tomorrow. I believe that tomorrow will be better than today. I believe that tomorrow will be better than today if I help make it so. Taara will help!"*

In 1933 the first Taaraist organisation *Tallinna Hiis* (the Sacred Grove of Tallinn) was established. By 1940 their numbers had increased to several thousand. During the subsequent German and Russian occupations Taaraist organisations were banned and many of their members were executed. Taaraism, which has been waning, has developed into a new-age-like sect and its members call themselves Taaraists. The original monotheism has been replaced with pantheon, but the discomfiture with traditional Estonian culture still persists.

Maausk

Estonian secularism of today is actually quite similar to nature-worship. Several ancient customs are still observed, for instance bonfires at midsummer, before the winter solstice the season of souls is observed, before feast days a sauna is traditional. Otherwise the sceptical and pragmatic Estonians are more than willing to entrust their health and fate into the hands of healers and sages. Among the contemporary customs of Estonians there are many that are sacrificial by nature. For example newly weds tie ribbons to trees and posts which have stork nests, and coins are thrown into springs. New customs have also emerged which are based on nature worship. On Christmas Eve, which according to Estonian folk calendar denotes the passing of the old year and also the end of the season of the souls, Estonian cemeteries are lit up with burning candles. During the years of suppression people have come to equate religion with Christianity.

When *Maausulised* (followers of *Maausk*) are told that *Maausk* is not a religion they generally agree, adding that *Maausk* is something much more than a religion. *Maausk* is our vernacular, our songs, our customs, our beliefs, our archetypes and culture. *Maausk* is thousands of years old, a tradition that binds us to our land.

To understand *Maausk* better it is essential to understand that the word *maa* in Estonian has many meanings and connotations. *Maa* can mean Earth, mother Earth, ground, land (as opposed to sea), cultivated land, earth (as soil), also country (state), country (as rural, opposed to the city) or finally as a suffix in the name of an Estonian county. But foremost *maa* denotes the land or country of indigenous Estonians. Thus Estonians have called themselves *maarahvas*, their country *Maavald* and their traditional nature-worship *Maausk*.

Maausk belongs to the same family as the nature worship of other Finno-Ugric peoples. As befitting nature-worship, *Maausk* is an oral tradition, that is passed on via stories, sayings, proverbs, songs and tacit attitudes. It has never been created, like for instance Islam or Christianity. In *Maausk* there are no holy men, no dogmas nor scripture. *Maausk* provides a culturally consistent harmony between *maarahvas* and their environment. *Maausk* has come into existence here in Estonia, and during hundreds and even thousands of years, it has grown and developed together with Estonian people. To put it simply, *maausk* is a survival teaching, that has enabled a settled people and its individual members to survive and live in harmony with themselves, other people and the forces of nature.

The gnostic ideology of *Maausk* is reflected in the Estonian language where there is neither gender nor future tense.** Therefore there is no polarity of opposites, nor absolute goodness and evil in *Maausk*. Its cognitive emphasis is directed at the past and the present. What has been done cannot be undone, and the responsibility for what one has done cannot be annulled.

Time

Maarahvas do not fear the dead, nor do they distinguish between the mundane and the supernatural. On the contrary, the living and the dead belong together and this is a source of great power. The souls of departed relatives spend the time from the end of September until Christmas at home. This period is known as the season of the souls and is sacred. The souls are eagerly awaited. In preparation for their coming the house is tidied, a feast is prepared, the sauna is heated. The same is done at the end of the season of the souls when they are sent back to the other world. Even those Estonians, who do not profess *maausk* or any other religion, usually light a candle on the second of November, the eve of the season of the souls, and place it in the window so that those lost would find their way home.

As with *maausk*, so too the Estonian folk calendar is in constant sympathetic dialogue with nature. Christmas (as the winter solstice and new year) is celebrated in a big way, as is *Leedopäev* (Summer solstice), Easter and Whitsunday (the start of Spring), *kasupäev* (end of the harvest and the beginning of winter) and other dates tied in with the phenological cycle. Time is depicted as circular and the seasons, like man's life cycle, progresses within this cycle of time.

According to the *Taaraists*, time began with the proclamation of Estonia's independence in

1918. Thus for them this is now year 85.

For the *Maausulised* the beginning of time is associated with the so-called Billingen Catastrophe when the ice-age Baltic lake broke through into the Atlantic Ocean. The sea level in that region dropped tens of metres in one year and a large part of present day Estonia emerged from under the waters and Estonia's history as such could begin. Therefore the *Maausulised* call this geological event the birth of the Earth. And so according to them on 25th of December 2003 the year 10217 will begin.

The Sacred and the Organisation

In *Maausk* there is no difference between the secular and the sacred. They do not look for life's hidden, deeper meaning outside the everyday. The mundane and the sacred are intertwined. Furthermore, in *Maausk* there are many intimate sacred domains that concern only the individual or a close group. Therefore for the *Maausulised*, the family, the clan, the village, the parish and the county are all religious units.

To preserve their ideology and customs in today's multi religious society, where there are many identities and trends, many religious organisations have been established under the auspices of *Taaraism* and the *Maavalla* Hall.

One of the main functions of *Maavalla* Hall has become the representation of the *Maausulised* in dealings with the state and the public. The Hall has been instrumental in gaining protection for many ancient sacred sites (groves, trees, springs, and stones). It has also sought legalisation of their customs, and has protested against the introduction of compulsory Christian religious studies into public schools. In order to represent the interests of non-Christians, the Hall established a round table that unites Moslems, Jews, Buddhists, Bahais and Hare Krishnas.

Ahto Kaasik

Scribe for the Maavalla Hall

Ahto Kaasik (1969), researcher of ancient Estonian cultural heritage, see also maavald.ee

* In Estonian the pronoun is not gender specific so it could be either he or she. (Translator's note)

** cf., Estonian Institute publication "Estonian Language":

<http://www.einst.ee/publications/language/>

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Illinois' Top 10 Military Ghosts

mysteriousheartland.com

12/07/2015 by Michael Kleen

The call to serve is only answered by a select few, and the scars of war are some of the most enduring. While Illinois is not often noted for its military history, it is home to a number of past and present military installations and prison camps. During the Civil War, Southern Illinois saw divided loyalties and some of its sons ran away to fight for the Confederacy. As a result, Mysterious Heartland has found that the ghosts of former servicemen have been encountered in many places throughout the Prairie State, from abandoned bases to cemeteries and beyond. Which will prove to be the most haunted of them all?

10. The Gray Ghosts of Illinois College

Jacksonville, Illinois



Confederate_Soldier

Founded by Presbyterians in 1829, Illinois College is one of the oldest colleges in Illinois. Its first president was Edward Beecher, brother of Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe. With such a rich history, it comes as no surprise that Illinois College is rich in ghostlore too. Nearly every building on campus is thought to have a ghost or two. Like Millikin University, the female dorm at Illinois College, Ellis Hall, is haunted by a young woman who allegedly committed suicide there. A “gray ghost”—a faceless phantom at that—hangs out on the stairwell of Whipple Hall. Another gray ghost, this one dressed in a Confederate uniform from the Civil War, has been seen in Sturtevant Hall. Phantom footsteps have been heard in Beecher Hall, the oldest building on campus. It is rumored that early in the college’s history, medical students stole cadavers from nearby hospitals in order to learn about anatomy. After a while, the hall where the bodies were stored began to smell, and the student’s grisly enterprise was uncovered.

9. Brother Against Brother at Old Zion Cemetery

Shawnee National Forest, Illinois



Civil_War

Old Zion Cemetery is a rural graveyard surrounded by forest, across the road from New Zion Methodist Church and New Zion Cemetery. In 1854, a woman named Jane Lay became the first burial in Old Zion. Its legends date back quite a few years, and include reports of a ghostly matron wearing a white dress. She wanders the grounds searching for something, and her distinctive flowery perfume can be smelled most notably in the winter. Another colorful story involves the ghosts of two brothers who died fighting on opposite sides of the Civil War. According to legend, they were buried next to each other and can be seen (on moonless nights) arguing around a campfire. On one occasion, a man approached the ghosts during this spectral argument and fled in terror when one of them

began to chase him.

8. Calvary Cemetery's Phantom Aviator

Evanston, Illinois



Calvary_Cemetery

This picturesque resting ground along the shore of Lake Michigan is home to the tale of “the Aviator,” or as he is sometimes affectionately known, “Seaweed Charlie.” In May 1951, Lt. Laverne F. Nabours, a WW2 veteran and an instructor at Glenview Naval Airbase, suffered engine failure on his FH-1 Phantom and careened into Lake Michigan. The plane did not sink right away, rather, Laverne climbed on top of the wing and began waving for help. He then tried to swim ashore, but succumbed to the powerful waves. In the late 1950s and 1960s, some passersby were treated to the alarming sight of a man drowning far out of reach in the icy waters. Even more startling was what came next. Instead of disappearing under the waves to a watery grave, the man, usually disheveled but sometimes covered in seaweed, emerged from the lake and crawled over the rocks toward the gate of Calvary Cemetery before ultimately vanishing. Sporadic sightings continued into the late '90s.

7. The Confederate Ghosts of Spirits Lounge

Alton, Illinois



Spirits_Lounge

In 2006, Gary Graham and Tim Brueggeman purchased this old Masonic temple and planned to open it as a bar, restaurant, and banquet center. The two made extensive renovations, knowing the building already had a reputation for being haunted. Unusual occurrences happened almost immediately upon its grand opening in 2007. Built around 1900, the Piasa Lodge of the Freemasons occupied the building for nearly a century. According to Gary Hawkins, who placed the former lodge on his ghost tour, it is occupied by dozens of ghosts, including two master Masons named James Brown and Frank Harris, a woman named Mrs. Smalley who haunts the lady's lounge, and two children. Four Confederate soldiers who died of smallpox are also believed to haunt one of the former temple's two basements, which were all that remained of an older building over which the Piasa Lodge was built.

6. General Turchin's Widow

Mound City, Illinois



General_Turchin

Established in 1862 during the Civil War, Mound City National Cemetery is a military cemetery that contains the bodies of 2,700 unknown Union soldiers. Army nurses, Confederate soldiers, spies, and even the colorful Russian officer General John B. Turchin (Ivan Vasilyevich Turchaninov), are also buried here. The cemetery is allegedly haunted by Turchin's wife, Nadine (Nadezhda), who has been seen wandering the grounds in a white dress. General Turchin served in the Union army during the Civil War and afterward came to live in Washington County. After his death at an institution in Anna, his wife mourned at his graveside until her own life ended a few years later and she was interred next to him. Visitors to the cemetery have also reported seeing lights in an old abandoned caretaker's house.

Check out these places and more in Michael Kleen's *Haunting Illinois: A Tourist's Guide to the Weird and Wild Places of the Prairie State!*

5. Big Muddy Bridge

De Soto, Illinois

Popular memory maintains that, during the Civil War, a detachment of Union soldiers guarded the railroad bridge across the Big Muddy River three miles north of Carbondale. It was considered to be a vital supply route in an area home to many Confederate sympathizers. Far from the frontlines, life at this outpost was tedious, repetitive, and uneventful. Some say the soldiers left an impression on the land around the bridge. Visitors have reportedly seen blue balls of light and heard the sound of a drum cadence. According to Bruce Cline, a group of students from Southern Illinois University blew a tire near the bridge and were approached by two men wearing blue Civil War-era uniforms. The men vanished before the students could ask who they were.

4. Greenwood Cemetery's Confederate Prisoners

Decatur, Illinois



Greenwood_Cemetery

Greenwood Cemetery is rumored to be one of the most haunted locations in central Illinois. According to Troy Taylor, the land that would become Greenwood was originally an Amerindian burial ground, and then was later used by the first white settlers to bury their dead until the late 1830s. These graves have since disappeared. The oldest visible marker on the grounds dates back to 1840, and Greenwood Cemetery was officially established in 1857. One of the most interesting stories at Greenwood concerns the ghosts of dead and dying Confederate prisoners who were dumped at the cemetery on their way to a prison camp and buried in the hillside under what is now a memorial to Union soldiers. Years later, heavy rain collapsed part of the hill, mixing the bodies together. The hill was repaired and the bodies reburied, but many believe their spirits were permanently disturbed. Another popular legend concerns the so-called "Greenwood Bride,"

who wanders the grounds in her wedding dress searching for her fiancé, who was murdered by bootleggers. Greenwood Cemetery is also haunted by phantom funerals, ghost lights that flicker in the southeastern hills, and other, more sinister apparitions.

3. Camp Grant Museum and Command Post Restaurant

Rockford, Illinois



Camp Grant

Camp Grant was established in 1917 as a sprawling army compound southwest of Rockford, just north of where the Chicago-Rockford International Airport exists today. It was a 5,460 acre facility with 1,100 buildings that housed 50,000 officers and enlisted men. During World War 2, it served as an induction and training center, a prisoner of war camp, and a medical training unit. Today, Camp Grant Museum is located in a building that served as one of the former fire stations and later the Induction and Muster Out Center for Camp Grant.

According to Yolanda Weisensel, the museum's owner, the building is haunted by servicemen that died during an epidemic in 1918. She has felt an unseen hand push her shoulder, and psychics have described seeing a soldier with a bandage on his head. Yolanda added, "I was walking past the hallway and looked down the hall, something or somebody (a young man) dressed in white ran across the end of the hall. If he had been real he would have run into a door. He was looking back over his shoulder laughing as if he was being chased for fun."

2. Small Pox Island

Alton, Illinois

During the Civil War, Alton was the location of a prison that housed prisoners of war. The prison was not originally designed to hold so many inmates, so conditions were crowded and unsanitary. During the winter of 1863 and spring of 1864, smallpox ravaged the camp. Infected prisoners were quarantined to an island in the Mississippi River. Anywhere between 1,000 and 5,000 Confederate prisoners and Union soldiers died in the outbreak, many on this one island, earning it the name "Small Pox Island." After the war, local residents avoided the island, and many believed it was haunted. A popular story tells of a group of boys who camped on the island to test its tales. They were greeted by the grim shades of dead Confederate prisoners from a bygone era. After a dam was constructed in 1938, the island disappeared beneath the waters of the Mississippi.

1. Chanute Air Force Base

Rantoul, Illinois



Aband3

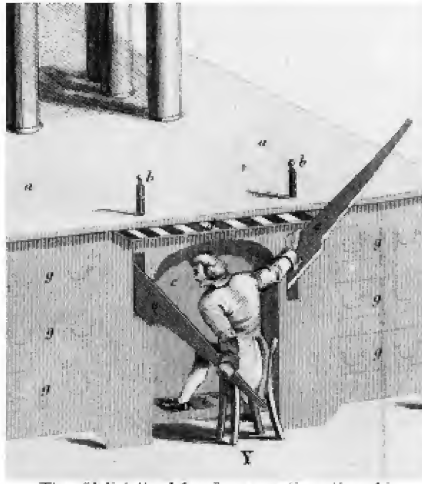
Chanute Air Force Base opened in Rantoul in July 1917 and was a vital part of the local economy for nearly 76 years. After its closure in 1993, much of the base was divided up into residential and commercial properties, but most of the core buildings remain abandoned. Inevitably, local kids exploring the abandoned parts of the base in the past few years have begun to bring home unusual stories. Some visitors have, through the broken windows, reported seeing an officer working at his desk. Others say they have seen phantom airmen strolling the weed-choked sidewalks or sitting in the cockpits of

the planes behind the Air Museum. On September 13, 2001, at 10pm, a police K-9 unit responded to a trespassing call at White Hall, one of the largest abandoned buildings on base. Dutch, an experienced canine with 957 drug arrests under his collar, pursued something up to the roof, where he suddenly and unexpectedly leapt 15 feet off the building and fell to his death.

Check out these places and more in Michael Kleen's *Haunting Illinois: A Tourist's Guide to the Weird and Wild Places of the Prairie State!* Three years in the making, the 3rd edition of *Hunting Illinois* is your ticket to adventure in your own backyard. This edition contains 60 new listings and 35 new pictures, for a total of 260 haunted or mysterious locations and more than 120 photos and illustrations. Divided into eight distinct regions and listed by county and town or neighborhood, each location features a description, directions, and sources from a wide variety of books, articles, and websites. *Haunting Illinois* challenges you to get off the couch and start exploring our wonderful State of Illinois. [Go here to order!](#)

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Mike Jay recounts the tragic story of James Tilly Matthews, a former peace activist of the Napoleonic Wars who was confined to London's notorious Bedlam asylum in 1797 for believing that his mind was under the control of the "Air Loom" – a terrifying machine whose mesmeric rays and mysterious gases were brainwashing politicians and plunging Europe into revolution, terror, and war.



The "Middle Man" operating the Air Loom: a detail from James Tilly Matthews' illustration of the Air Loom featured in John Haslam's *Illustrations of Madness* (1810) – Source: Wellcome Library, London (CC-BY 4.0)

In 1810 John Haslam, a London apothecary, published the first ever book-length description of a mad person's delusions. Until this point most medical case histories of what we now refer to as mental illness had amounted to a line or two at most, and more often just a single word such as "frenzied" or "melancholy". But the opinions of James Tilly Matthews resisted any such summary. He described a previously unimagined world of futuristic machines, "magnetic spies" and mass brainwashing, woven into a bizarre but undeniably well-informed narrative of the high politics behind the Napoleonic Wars.

Haslam titled his book *Illustrations of Madness*, and it was full of lessons for the nascent profession of "mad-doctoring", later to be known as psychiatry. But it was also written to settle a personal score. Haslam was the apothecary at the Royal Bethlem Hospital – in popular slang, Bedlam – where James Tilly Matthews had for the previous decade been confined as

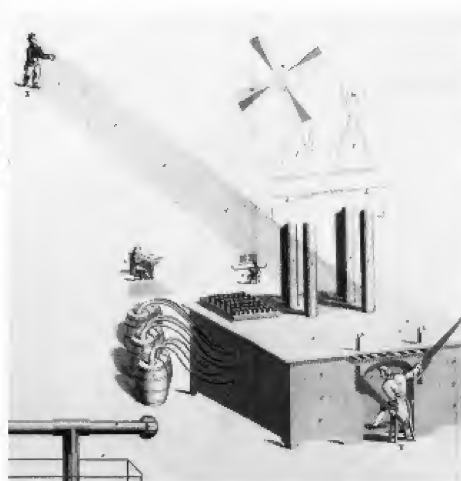
an incurable lunatic. Not everyone, however, believed that Matthews was mad. Haslam's diagnosis had been contested by other doctors, and the governors of Bethlem had distanced themselves from it. He wrote his book in retaliation against his superiors; but as it turned out, his patient would have the last word.

Although Haslam has been relegated to a footnote in the history of psychiatry, his account of Matthews' inner world is still cited as the first fully described case of what we now call paranoid schizophrenia, and in particular of an "influencing machine": the belief, or delusion, that a covertly operated device is acting at a distance to control the subject's mind and body. For everyone who has since had messages beamed at them by the CIA, MI5, Masonic lodges or UFOs, via dental fillings, mysterious implants, TV sets or surveillance satellites, James Tilly Matthews is patient zero.

Over the ten years they had spent together in Bedlam, Matthews revealed his secret world to Haslam in exhaustive detail. Around the corner from Bedlam, in a dank basement cellar by London Wall, a gang of villains were controlling and tormenting him with a machine called an "Air Loom". Matthews had even drawn a technical diagram of the device, which Haslam included in his book with a sarcastic commentary that invited the reader to laugh at its



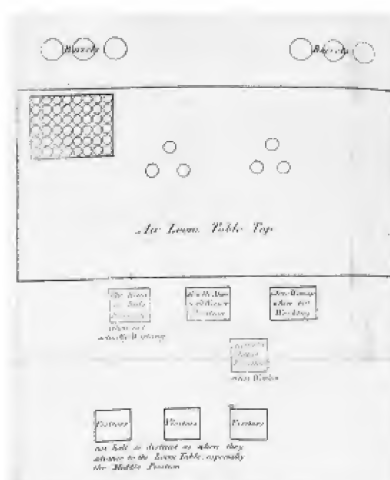
A victim of the Air Loom's influencing rays, perhaps Matthews himself, a detail from James Tilly Matthews' illustration of the Air Loom featured in John Haslam's *Illustrations of Madness* (1810) – Source: Wellcome Library, London (CC-BY 4.0)



A detail from the lower portion of James Tilly Matthews' illustration of the Air Loom featured in John Haslam's *Illustrations of Madness* (1810) – Source: Wellcome Library, London (CC-BY 4.0)

absurdity: a literal “illustration of madness”. But Matthews' drawing has a more unnerving effect than Haslam allows. Levers, barrels, batteries, brass retorts and cylinders are rendered with the cool conviction of an engineer's blueprint. It is the first ever published work of art by an asylum inmate, but it would hardly have looked out of place in the scientific journals or encyclopaedias of its day.

The Air Loom worked, as its name suggests, by weaving “airs”, or gases, into a “warp of magnetic fluid” which was then directed at its victim. Matthews' explanation of its powers combined the cutting-edge technologies of pneumatic chemistry and the electric battery with the controversial science of animal magnetism, or mesmerism. The finer



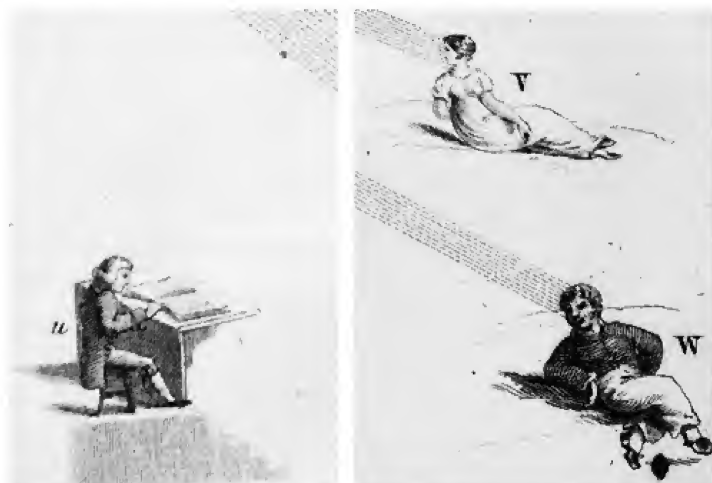
The upper portion, showing an aerial blueprint – Source: Wellcome Library, London (CC-BY 4.0)

detail becomes increasingly strange. It was fuelled by combinations of “fetid effluvia”, including “spermatic-animal-seminal rays”, “putrid human breath”, and “gaz from the anus of the horse”, and its magnetic warp assailed Matthews' brain in a catalogue of forms known as “event-workings”. These included “brain-saying” and “dream-working”, by which thoughts were forced into his brain against his will, and a terrifying array of physical tortures from “knee nailing”, “vital tearing” and “fibre ripping” to “apoplexy-working with the nutmeg grater” and the dreaded “lobster-cracking”, where the air around his chest was constricted until he was unable to breathe. To facilitate their control over him, the gang had implanted a magnet into his brain. He was tormented constantly by hallucinations, physical agonies, fits of laughter or being forced to parrot whatever words they chose to feed into his head. No wonder some

people thought he was mad.

The machine's operators were a gang of undercover Jacobin terrorists, who Matthews described with haunting precision. Their leader, Bill the King, was a coarse-faced and ruthless puppetmaster who “has never been known to smile”; his second-in-command, Jack the Schoolmaster, took careful notes on the Air Loom's operations, pushing his wig back with

his forefinger as he wrote. The operator was a sinister, pockmarked lady known only as the “Glove Woman”. The public face of the gang was a sharp-featured woman named Augusta, superficially charming but “exceedingly spiteful and malignant” when crossed, who roamed London’s west end as an undercover agent.



Jack the Schoolmaster (left) and two other members of the gang, Sir Archy and Catherine (right): details from James Tilly Matthews' illustration of the Air Loom featured in John Haslam's *Illustrations of Madness* (1810) – Source: Wellcome Library, London (CC-BY 4.0)

The operation directed at Matthews was only part of a larger story. There were more Air Looms and their gangs concealed across London, and their unseen influence extended all the way up to the Prime Minister, William Pitt, whose mind was firmly under their control. Their agents lurked in streets, theatres and coffee-houses, where they tricked the unsuspecting into inhaling magnetic fluids. If the gang were recognised in public, they would grasp magnetised batons that clouded the perception of anyone in the vicinity. The object of their intrigues was to poison the minds of politicians on both sides of the Channel, and thereby keep Britain and revolutionary France locked into their ruinous war.

Matthews' beliefs had their roots in his implausible but true story. A political activist and peace campaigner, he had become involved during the French revolution in clandestine efforts to head off the looming war between France and England. Shuttling between London and Paris, he had remarkable success in persuading the moderate faction of the French government to commit to a peace plan, and he had met several times with Pitt and Lord Liverpool, his secretary of war, to propose an alliance with them against the Jacobins and the Paris mob.

But the execution of King Louis XVI in 1793 set Britain and France on an inexorable course to war, and Matthews was eventually arrested in Paris by the Committee of Public Safety on suspicion of being an English spy. He remained under arrest during the height of the Terror, in constant fear of the guillotine. When he was released three years later, he limped home to England and accused Pitt and Liverpool of abandoning a loyal patriot. His letters were ignored, and his accusations became more florid: Pitt's government were secretly in league with the Jacobins, and prolonging the war for their own corrupt ends. Finally he confronted his betrayers in the public gallery of the House of Commons on 30 December 1796, loudly accusing Lord Liverpool of treason. He was arrested, judged to be of unsound mind and sent to Bedlam.

All Matthews' convoluted tales of espionage and conspiracy were considered by Haslam merely as a symptom of his madness, and dealt with accordingly. His treatment of lunatics, as described in his earlier book *Observations on Insanity* (1798), stressed the need to “obtain an ascendancy” over the patient, a process comparable to training a dog or breaking in a



A view of Bethlehem Royal Hospital, London, from Lambeth Road, published in The Queen's London (1896) – Source .

horse. To debate with lunatics about their beliefs was to enter a “perplexity of metaphysical mazes”. Matthews in turn refused to acknowledge Haslam’s authority, maintaining that he was merely a stooge of the Home Secretary, yet another bit-player in the international conspiracy to silence him.

Confined and neglected, Matthews’ persecutory fantasies intensified. But his family refused to accept that he was mad. To them he still appeared his lucid, intelligent and gentle self: it was tragic but understandable that his

traumatic experiences had left him with some cranky political views. Haslam’s theory of insanity, however, allowed for no such generosity. As he put it in *Illustrations of Madness*, “Madness being the opposite to reason and good sense, as light is to darkness, straight is to crooked &c., it appears wonderful that two opposite opinions could be entertained on the subject”. Matthews was mad: no-one who believed they were controlled by an Air Loom could be otherwise, and “there are already too many maniacs allowed to enjoy a dangerous liberty”. He banned Matthews’ wife from visiting him in Bethlem.



Portrait of John Haslam, engraved by Henry Dawe after a painting by George Dawe – Source .

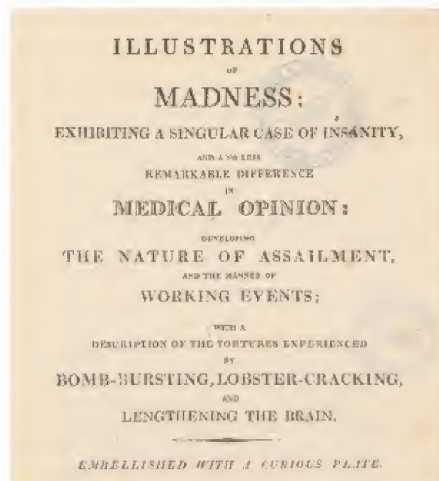
Matthews’ family persisted with their case that he was sane, and offered to guarantee his good behaviour if he were released. Finally, in 1809, they were permitted to engage two physicians named Henry Clutterbuck and George Birkbeck to examine Matthews independently. Both concluded that he was in his right mind, and that his alleged symptoms of madness – hostility to authority and insistence that he was being conspired against – could equally be seen as the responses of a sane man unjustly confined.

On the basis of this testimony Matthews’ family served Bethlem with a writ of Habeas Corpus, forcing the governors to state their legal reasons for holding him. Haslam wrote a lengthy affidavit on Matthews’ case, detailing his delusions and claiming that he had made violent threats against the life

of George III. In the end, however, the case turned on a short letter from the Home Secretary recommending “that you do continue to detain in your hosp[ital] as a fit and proper subject James Tilly Matthews a lunatic who is at present under your charge”. The Bethlem governors justified Matthews’ detention on the basis that he was “in the Hospital by the order and with the knowledge of Government”, and the writ of Habeas Corpus was rejected. Matthews, it seemed, was not a lunatic but a political prisoner, just as he had always maintained.

Having his medical opinion dismissed in this way spurred Haslam to publish a full account of

the case. *Illustrations of Madness* opened with a withering attack on Clutterbuck and Birkbeck: “how they failed to detect his insanity is inexplicable”. He paraded Matthews’ delusions like a ringmaster in the circus of lunacy, advertising on the title page ‘a singular case of insanity, and a no less remarkable difference in medical opinion’, and tantalising the reader with the prospect of “a description of the tortures experienced by bomb-bursting, lobster-cracking and lengthening the brain”. All this was “embellished with a curious plate” – Matthews’ drawing of the Air Loom – and accompanied by excerpts from Matthews’ own notes on the “mischievous and complicated science” that lay behind it.



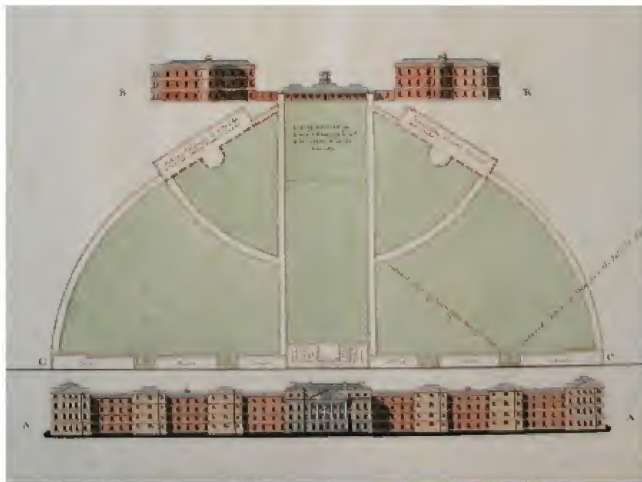
Title page to Haslam's *Illustrations of Madness* (1810) – Source: Wellcome Library, London (CC-BY 4.0)

Although *Illustrations of Madness* was an extended argument for his permanent detention, Matthews managed to turn its publication to his advantage. His drawing of the Air Loom was admired by visiting doctors, and he began to teach himself draughtsmanship and engraving. The following year he submitted architectural plans for a new Bethlem hospital which so impressed the governors that they awarded him a prize of £30. In 1814 his family succeeded in transferring him to a more congenial private asylum, Fox's London House in Hackney. Dr. Samuel Fox, the proprietor, regarded him as entirely sane, and he was soon helping out with book-keeping and gardening.

Matthews died the following year, but he had his revenge on Haslam from beyond the grave. In 1815 a House of Commons committee was set up to investigate conditions in madhouses, including allegations of mismanagement and cruelty at Bethlem. When examined, Haslam blamed the hospital staff: they were incompetent and frequently drunk, and the resident surgeon was “so insane as to have a strait-waistcoat”. In response, the head keeper testified that Haslam, frustrated by Matthews’ refusal to accept his authority, had kept him in handcuffs “to punish him for the use of his tongue”. Chaining non-violent patients had become emblematic of the evils of the old madhouse system, and indeed Haslam had criticised the practice in his own books. When the Committee’s report was published in 1816, he was dismissed by the Bethlem governors.

Haslam’s career was ruined. He sold everything he owned, doggedly retrained as a physician and eventually took his M.D. at the age of sixty. He became a specialist legal witness in trials involving criminal lunacy, giving his opinion on questions such as imbecility and “lucid intervals”. But Matthews’ case seems to have destroyed his certainty that the mad could be unfailingly distinguished from the sane. In his old age, when asked in court whether a defendant was of sound mind, he replied: “I never saw any human being who was of sound mind”. Pressed further by the judge, he simply added: “I presume the Deity is of sound mind, and He alone”.

Mike Jay has written extensively on scientific and medical history and is the author of *A Visionary Madness: The Case of James Tilly Matthews and the Influencing Machine*. His



Detail from one of Matthews' plan for the new Bethlem hospital – Source: Bethlem, Museum of the Mind

other books include *The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr Beddoes and His Sons of Genius* and *High Society: Mind-Altering Drugs in History and Culture*.

Mindcraft from the Wellcome Collection

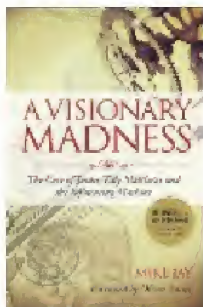
The above animation from Beakus is part of of the Wellcome Collection's new online and digital exhibition titled Mindcraft, which explores a century of madness, murder and mental healing, from the arrival in Paris of Franz Anton Mesmer with his theories of 'animal magnetism' to the therapeutic power

of hypnotism used by Freud. [Learn more here.](#)

Links to Public Domain Works

- *Illustrations of Madness* (1810), by John Haslam.
 - Wellcome Library
- *Observations on insanity : with practical remarks on the disease, and an account of the morbid appearances on dissection* (1798), by John Haslam.
 - Internet Archive
- *A letter to the Lord Chancellor on the nature and interpretation of unsoundness of mind, and imbecility of intellect* (1823), by John Haslam.
 - Internet Archive

Further Reading



A Visionary Madness: The Case of James Tilly Matthews and the Influencing Machine (North Atlantic Books, 2014)

by Mike Jay

Through a study of James Tilly Matthews, a man who believed himself to be under the influence of a machine that could read and control his mind, this book provides a wider look at 18th-century psychiatry and the social upheaval of which defined the time. Foreword by Oliver Sacks.

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In the spring and summer of 1932, against a backdrop of record unemployment and mass starvation, more than 20,000 jobless First World War veterans and their families marched to Washington DC to demand immediate payment of their wartime 'bonus', which had been promised to them for their service. The march exploded in a violent clash between government and veteran forces: by the end of July their camps outside the White House had been stormed, and two First World War soldiers were dead



Bonus Army, Washington DC, 8 April 1932. (Underwood Archives/Getty Images)

This largely forgotten episode in history is the subject of Johanna Skibsrud's new novel, *Quartet for the End of Time*. Here, Skibsrud – the winner of Canada's Giller Prize (the equivalent to Britain's Booker) – tells you everything you need to know about the Bonus Army.

Q: Who led the Bonus Army?

A: The Bonus Army was a group of more than 20,000 unemployed First World War veterans, their families and supporters, who marched to

Washington DC in the spring and summer of 1932 in order to demand immediate cash payment of their wartime 'Bonus'.

Their leader – a charismatic veteran from Washington State named Walter Waters – organised a sprawling, makeshift city for his followers on the Anacostia flats and along Pennsylvania Avenue. By July, numbers had swelled: some 43,000 Bonus marchers were camped, almost literally, outside the White House gates.

Q: Was the 'Bonus' really a bonus?

A: No. It was an insurance policy – payable at death, or 1945, whichever came first. It had been implemented back in 1924. The term 'Bonus' was, in fact, officially rejected by the American Legion: it implied that the veterans had already received adequate compensation.

In 1945, the Bonus, or 'adjusted service certificate' would be worth 125 per cent of the value of each veteran's service credit (based on days served). But, by 1932, with record unemployment rates and the country facing mass starvation, the veterans were no longer willing to wait that long.

Q: Who supported the march, and who didn't?

A: Among supporters of the veterans and their cause were railroad workers, who added extra boxcars to trains; corporations and private citizens, who donated money and food; and religious, political and community leaders, who urged the veterans on when their spirits flagged.

To those in power, however, the Bonus Marchers represented not an organised protest of starving patriots with a very specific agenda, but the threat of an imminent communist takeover.

It was true that a small faction of Bonus marchers (vehemently, and sometimes violently, opposed by Walter Waters) were led by the communist organiser, John T Pace. It was also true that, as the summer progressed, Waters grew increasingly militant in his approach. He openly modelled himself after Benito Mussolini, whose rise to power had been spurred by his support of First World War veterans in his own country.

Q: So what happened?

A: Despite large-scale protests and numerous attempts at negotiation, no significant progress had been made in passing the Bonus Bill, which would compensate veterans for their wartime service, by the time Congress adjourned for the summer on 16 July 1932. Now there were 43,000 starving veterans and their followers camped at the doorstep of the White House, with no hope of having their case heard until December, when Congress reconvened.

Something had to be done.

On several occasions before, the veterans had been urged to leave peaceably. At one point, they were even offered cash, and instructions to leave town on the first available train. Very few took up the offer, however, and it was rumoured that those who did, did so only in order to recruit more men.

On the morning of 28 July, Waters received an eviction notice – effective immediately. Soon after, government forces, led by no less a figure than General Douglas MacArthur, stormed both the Pennsylvania Avenue and Anacostia Camps, smoking out 10,000 men, women and children – including at least several veterans of the 42nd ‘Rainbow’ division, which MacArthur himself had led into battle at Verdun and through the Marne.

At the end of the riot, the Bonus camps had been burned to the ground, the forces scattered, and two veterans were dead: William Hushka, aged 35, a Lithuanian immigrant and veteran from Chicago, who had sold his butcher shop to join the US army in 1917; and Eric Carlson, 38 years old, from Oakland, California, who had survived the most brutal of the fighting in France.

Q: Did the veterans ever receive their Bonus?

A: Yes. For four years after their forced expulsion from the city, the veterans continued to return to Washington – though never in the same numbers as they had in the summer of

1932. Finally, in 1936, Congress overrode Roosevelt's symbolic veto, and the Bonus Bill passed through the house. Soon after, the veterans were issued their payments – the average payout somewhere in the vicinity of \$550.

Q: And that was the end of it?

A: Yes and no. Though few people remember the Bonus Army now, or the riot of 1932, the Bonus movement led directly to the creation of the present-day GI Bill [The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, which provided a range of benefits for returning Second World War veterans], and indirectly to FDR's 'New Deal', along with several key ventures designed to put the veterans back to work.

If we let it, the Bonus Army also continues to serve as a reminder of how difficult it can be, when it comes to the question of unpopular wars and what is owed, to settle on a fair price.

Johanna Skibsrud's new novel, *Quartet for the End of Time* (Cornerstone Publishing) is now on sale. To find out more, click here.

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4-15-2011

From the Middle Ages to Modernity: The Intersecting Supernatural Worlds of Melusine and Today's Popular Culture

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a thing. And I know, as well, all the words that he had said to you, with his knowledge of the stars. (D'Arras 95)

Raymondin marvels that Mélusine knows all about him and wonders why she seems so eager to help rectify his situation; after she assures him that she is “part of God’s scheme and...believe[s] everything that a good Catholic should believe”—and after he remembers his uncle’s promise that he will prosper—Raymondin accepts Mélusine’s supernaturalism and agrees to marry her (D’Arras 97). Thus Raymondin helps bring Mélusine more fully into the human world, where she may fulfill the prophecy—namely that she will give birth to a noble line—included in her curse. Mélusine later demonstrates her supernatural abilities by prophesying how Raymondin will regain the inheritance and the reputation of his father, Hervé de Leon, from the hands of Josselin de Pont de Leon: she tells Raymondin exactly how Josselin framed Hervé many years before, and gives Raymondin precise information about who will help him and who will fight against him on this quest. Raymondin respectfully promises to follow his wife’s instructions exactly, saying “*Madame, je feray mon pouvoir d’accomplir vostre commandement*” (D’Arras 152) and, because he does as she says, he triumphs over his foes.

Raymondin soon sees more proof of Mélusine’s supernatural powers: like her fairy mother, Mélusine possesses great wealth. When Mélusine and Raymondin marry at the *Fontaine de Soif* soon after their first meeting there, Mélusine and her entourage prepare splendid tents for and give costly gifts and jewels to their guests. They also manage to decorate the chapel with priceless tapestries, censers, Gospel books, and the like, and they serve an amazingly sumptuous wedding feast, despite the fact that no one in the land has ever seen or heard of Mélusine before her marriage to Raymondin. The fact that Mélusine and her attendants manage all of this without outside help strongly suggests that Mélusine organizes the wedding celebration by

means of the magical powers she formerly employed to imprison her father. Similarly, Mélusine's construction of the fortress of Lusignan reveals her supernatural gifts: her workers build the walls and towers so quickly and so well that all who pass by are "dumbfounded"—*"tous ceulx qui par la passoient en estoient esbahiz"* (D'Arras 142-143). In fact, the very name of the city she establishes reveals her supernatural gifts, as the count of Poitiers points out when Mélusine christens the city "Lusignan." He says: "This name suits it, for two reasons. For you are called Mélusine of Albanie, or Scotland, and Albanie, in Greek, means 'that which never fails,' and Mélusine means 'wonder' or 'wondrous.' This fortress was founded in a wondrous way, and I believe that as long as it lasts...wondrous events will take place here" (D'Arras 145). Mélusine, then, demonstrates her supernatural abilities in both deed and name.

The wealth and splendor comprised in the supernatural world of *Mélusine* are also apparent in several contemporary tales. In the *Twilight* series, the Cullens seem to have limitless wealth and own the best of everything: a beautiful home, designer clothes, a fleet of very expensive cars, and even their own tiny island off the coast of Brazil. The Volturi are even richer: they possess their own city, complete with an ancient castle, and an impressive collection of wealth and jewels, from which they send Bella a wedding gift: a necklace set with "a white diamond the size of a golf ball" (*Breaking Dawn* 532). To be sure, the werewolves—who are also part of the supernatural world—do not share this wealth; in fact, their tendency to destroy clothing and shoes when they transform before undressing forces them to dress rather shabbily most of the time, and the reservation on which they live is hardly noted for its affluence. Yet the werewolves—unlike the fairies in medieval tales or the *Twilight* breed of vampires—are also mortal, so perhaps they simply do not have time to accumulate the riches possessed by their counterparts.

In *True Blood*, vampire sheriffs Eric and Godric enjoy similar wealth: Eric's vampire bar, "Fangtasia," seems to do a lucrative business (and his wealth is presumably boosted still higher with his criminal activities and his ability to glamour humans and exact tribute from vampires within his jurisdiction), and Godric resides in a mansion decked out in sleek, expensive furniture. Sophie-Anne, the vampire queen of Louisiana, lives in an even more magnificent mansion, dresses in opulent clothing during leisure activities, and pays well to keep a seemingly endless supply of attractive humans who are willing to share their blood with the queen and her vampire guests.

Though the television series *Supernatural* does not necessarily highlight the wealth of its supernatural characters, it does provide an interesting twist on some of the supernatural elements portrayed in *Mélusine*, *Twilight* and *True Blood*. Like the other works, it operates on the premise that fairy tales are real, this fact does not seem to foreshadow the happy ending generally associated with fantasy stories. Rather than generous fairies who help advance their husbands' interests or "vegetarian" vampires and "Protector" werewolves concerned with keeping nearby humans safe, the supernatural characters that Sam and Dean Winchester encounter are blood-thirsty monsters, vengeful witches, and evil demons. Unlike benevolent shape-shifters *Mélusine*, Sam Merlotte, and the Quileute werewolves or moral vampires like Bill Compton and the Cullens—who generally endeavor to use their supernatural abilities for good—the fantastic creatures in *Supernatural* are almost always evil, feeling contempt for the humans they meet and rarely hesitating to maim or kill them. Of course, there is at least one exception to the evil norm of supernatural beings—Castiel, the angel who befriends the Winchester boys and aids them in their fight against Lucifer—but he seems to be the exception that proves the rule in *Supernatural*.

In addition to the series' overwhelming majority of evil supernatural creatures, it differs from the other stories in that both of its main characters, Sam and Dean Winchester, are fully human (though they are, to be sure, possessed, intoxicated with demon blood, or infected with ghost diseases from time to time), whereas the main characters in *Mélusine*, *Twilight*, and *True Blood* are (or at least become) supernatural beings. Despite being human, however, the Winchester brothers are very much a part of the supernatural world. In fact, they seem almost more at home there than they do among ordinary humans: the brothers live in their car while they fight monsters, insuring that they never settle down and have few deep relationships with other humans; they befriend, by turns, angels and demons, and are well known as hunters by a variety of supernatural creatures; they journey to both Heaven and Hell and are raised from the dead on several occasions; and their family is cursed by the interference of the yellow-eyed demon and by the part it's destined to play in the Apocalypse. Their involvement with the supernatural world may not change their humanity, but it does, arguably, raise them to somewhat superhuman status; just as Batman becomes a superhero using the resources he has at hand—rather than innate abilities to fly or become invisible, for example—so Sam and Dean Winchester use their supernatural-hunting expertise to transform themselves into sorts of demigods capable of opposing the monsters they encounter. Because of their close connections with the supernatural world, the main characters in *Supernatural* remain a valuable part of this study, despite the differences between their story and the supernatural romances *Mélusine*, *Twilight*, and *True Blood*.

Supernatural Bodies

Within all of the aforementioned tales, the conception of supernatural characters as

monsters is also a common (and commonly debated) theme among fantasy tales. The title character of *Mélusine*, for example, is cursed to transform into a half-serpent each Saturday and, after Raymondin denounces her in front of the court, she adopts a fully serpent body “some fifteen feet in length” (D’Arras 609). Mélusine’s hybrid body is the source of a great deal of tension in the tale, for it invites debate over whether she is truly good or evil, superhuman or subhuman. Stephen G. Nichols identifies several points which seem to confirm Mélusine as a monster, from her name to her attributes; he writes that

Jean [D’Arras] brilliantly succeeds in co-opting under the particular name, “Mélusine,” associated with the Lusignan family by parochial and largely unrecorded legend, an anonymous category, the “lamia,” a species of female monster, of which there exists a long and voluminous tradition from the late classical period down to Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) and John Keat’s striking poem, “Lamia” (1819). (140)

Nichols also finds in Mélusine four characteristics associated with demons that seem to confirm her status as a monster: she possesses an “irresolvable duality” for we can never be certain of her true nature; she (and her romance with Raymondin) seem to fit into a pattern of “compulsive repetition” consistent with her dual nature; she compels a “distorting perception” by making Raymondin promise not to look at her on Saturdays or to tell anyone if he does see her, “thereby suggesting that there is ‘something dirty’ or discreditable to see”; and her appearance is one of “illusion,” for when Raymondin peers at her body through the door he sees, “[i]n place of the anticipated erotogenic body...the monstrous hybrid: a female torso terminating in a lithe and outsize phallus displaced as a fish’s tale” (142-143). He also cites three illuminations of scenes from *Mélusine* which depict the “dual representation of Mélusine in her human form as beautiful

woman and as a rampant, miniature dragon” and concludes that Mélusine is “technically a monster, that is a hybrid, born of mixing the demonic and human categories represented respectively by Presine and Elinas” (Nichols 151-152). Other scholars have shared the belief that Mélusine is a monster: Gabrielle M. Spiegel, in reference to Mélusine’s decision to imprison Elinas in the enchanted mountain, writes that in this “contest between humanity and animality, it is animality that triumphs” (Spiegel 108). She also highlights the various physical flaws with which Mélusine’s sons are born, identifying them as “physical testimony to the monstrous (if not actually demonic) maternity that gave them life” (Spiegel 109). In the conclusion of her essay, she writes

Written toward the end of the Hundred Years’ War, the *Roman de Mélusine* confronts the crisis of legitimacy and the bestiality that lie at the heart of that age. In tracing the descent of the Lusignan into animality, Jean articulates the belief that there is nothing more monstrous than *l’homme animalisé*....Yet the very ambiguity with which he sets forth this critique makes even this statement problematical. (Spiegel 118)

As these scholars point out, it is conceivable that Mélusine’s character should be considered a monstrous or even demonic one, yet the doubt conveyed in Spiegel’s conclusion—that, despite Mélusine’s assumption of a serpent body, categorizing her as a monstrous animal is “problematical”—also reminds us that there are other ways of interpreting Mélusine.

While Mélusine’s hybrid body is undoubtedly a cause of tension in the tale, some have seen this tension, rather than the portrayal of Mélusine as a monster, as the author’s true design. According to this view, it is her “hybrid status—both inside and outside history—that allows the figure of Mélusine to lend prestige and authority to the Lusignan lineage, while at the same time

legitimizing the appropriation...of the fortress of Lusignan by Jean de Berry, Jean d'Arras's patron" (Brownlee 76). For example, when Raymondin spies on the bathing Mélusine and discovers her serpent tail, we are meant to sense the tension between the erotic image of a bathing woman and the more ominous sight of a woman who is part snake. In other words, the "spectacle of Mélusine's monstrous body is juxtaposed to Raymondin's construction of her in poignantly human terms, by means of courtly discursive conventions. At the same time, Mélusine as female fairy monster is de-eroticized, while Mélusine as courtly human is re-eroticized" (Brownlee 83-84). Though Raymondin witnesses his wife's transformed body, he walks away desiring not to shame her by revealing her curse but rather to protect her secret so he may remain with her. Later in the tale, when he blames Mélusine for giving birth to monstrous offspring—in this instance, Geoffroy, who has killed Fromont and the monks at Maillezais—the tension is present once again; though Mélusine's sons do bear marks that could prove their monstrous maternal lineage, the fact that Raymondin mourns the loss of Fromont *because of his innocence* reveals that Mélusine's sons have not uniformly inherited an evil nature, as Raymondin claims (Brownlee 87). Thus Raymondin's condemnation of his wife is "a literally correct but spiritually inadequate description of Mélusine" (Brownlee 87). The scene of betrayal seems to cast Raymondin as the transgressor and Mélusine as the one wronged; rather than presenting her as an evil monster, she appears strangely human, and is only forced to assume a fully serpent body because of Raymondin's unfaithfulness. Brownlee points out that "Mélusine's final speech in her human body—from the liminal space of the windowsill—involves a series of increasingly intense and explicit affirmations of the different aspects of her human identity," including her Christian piety and her human ancestry (Brownlee 91). Even when she flies from the window and leaves Lusignan after Raymondin's betrayal, Mélusine

retains her human love and grief, letting out “such a strange and mournful cry that all [weep] for pity” as she circles the castle, showing that she is not a monster but rather a “lady, in the form of a serpent” (D’Arras 609). Mélusine’s final transformation, then, is “not definitive but open-ended. And as such, it serves to illustrate (to ‘embody’) a particularly fourteenth-century poetics—and politics—of hybridization” (Brownlee 96). We cannot separate her monstrosity from her humanity in order to condemn her, for the two are too intimately connected; we may, at times, recoil from the marks of her non-humanness, but we ultimately relate to her humanity.

This balance between two natures—one monster, one human—is also present in contemporary supernatural tales. Like Mélusine, the *Twilight* werewolves shift from a human form to a bestial one, though they have some control over when their bodies transform and, whereas Mélusine becomes a serpent only from the waist down at first, they always change completely. In the final book of the series, one of the Volturi reveals the true nature of the shape-shifting Quileute pack:

Though the creatures think of themselves as werewolves, they are not. The more accurate name for them would be shape-shifters. The choice of a wolf form was purely chance. It could have been a bear or a hawk or a panther when the first change was made. These creatures truly have nothing to do with the Children of the Moon. They have merely inherited this skill from their fathers. It’s genetic—they do not continue their species by infecting others the way true werewolves do....They are creatures of our supernatural world. (*Breaking Dawn* 704-705)

Mélusine’s shape-shifting is a curse rather than a genetic inheritance, but Mélusine and the *Twilight* wolves may both trace their shape-shifting capabilities back to their parents. In fact, most of the wolves, at one time or another, would likely refer to their abilities as a “curse,” too:

their transformations cause strains in their relationships with ordinary humans, their tendency to transform when angry sometimes ends in them injuring the ones they love, and, when in wolf form, they are forced to share all their thoughts with the pack and to follow unconditionally the orders of their leader. When Jacob reveals his secret to Bella, for example, he tells her that the pack's shared mind "really helps when we hunt [vampires], but it's a big pain otherwise. It's embarrassing—having no secrets like that" (*New Moon* 317). Although they take wolf forms, can hunt based on instinct, and experience increased aggression, the wolves retain their human abilities to reason and their human emotions; thus they, like Mélusine, possess a dual nature which causes tension in the series but does not actually strip them of their humanity.

This theme continues in the *True Blood* series, where shape-shifters Sam Merlotte and Daphne Landry also shift from human forms into animal ones. We are never told how they inherit their abilities but what little we know of Sam's childhood seems to indicate that he, like the *Twilight* wolves, inherited his abilities from his biological parents and discovered them during puberty. It is clear, though, that Sam and Daphne have more freedom than the *Twilight* wolves or Mélusine: they can not only transform whenever they want to, but also can assume any animal form they choose, so long as they have looked closely at the animal beforehand. Despite the animality of their transformations, they paradoxically remain human, for they, too, retain their human thoughts and personalities when they transform.

The good vampires in these two contemporary series also manage to retain elements of their humanity, and these elements both contribute to the conflict in the stories and add to their appeal. The Cullen family, for instance, is distinguished from other vampires by their decision to abstain from drinking human blood, a choice which enables them to assimilate in the world of ordinary humans. They drink animal blood not to preserve their own safety but to save the

people living around them; their abstinence becomes a “marker of morality” in the series (Platt 79). Their moral decision to spare human lives is based on a human idea, not a vampire one; other vampires—even relatively civil vampires like those whom the Cullens assemble as witnesses in the final book of the series—are not bothered by the thought of killing humans; it is merely something they must do to survive. All vampires possess superhuman instincts and abilities: they are fast and strong, are nearly impossible to kill, and are the ultimate predators. Despite sharing these characteristics, the Cullens’ comparative humanity throws them into sharp contrast with their peers; even their eyes—golden instead of red because of their alternative diets—are different from those of other vampires. “These eyes,” according to Kathryn Kane, “represent Edward and the Cullens’ triumph in terms of rationality and morality. When Bella first meets vampires outside of the Cullen family, she is struck by their animalistic qualities, their ‘catlike’ gait, and their ‘hair filled with leaves and debris,’ but what most frightens Bella is their eyes” (108).

Like the Cullens, vampire Bill Compton has qualms about killing humans. Though he occasionally drinks from humans without killing them, he prefers to drink only Sookie’s blood (because it adds to their intimacy) or the manufactured True Blood beverages which satisfy the nutritional needs of vampires and enable them to “come out of the coffin” and mix openly in human society. Bill decides to “go mainstream,” or live among humans, and reestablishes a residence in Bon Temps, where he lived before he was made a vampire during the Civil War. Bill’s decision to assimilate and his monogamous relationship with Sookie distinguish him from other vampires and prove that he has retained parts of his humanity. Even vampire sheriff Eric Northman, who became one of the undead over a thousand years ago, shows human love (though

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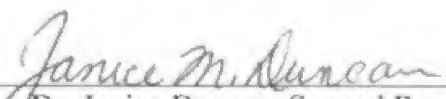
**“From the Middle Ages to Modernity: The Intersecting
Supernatural Worlds of *Mélusine* and Today’s Popular Culture”**


written by


Sarah Stark

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for completion of the
Carl Goodson Honors Program
meets the criteria for acceptance
and has been approved by the undersigned readers.


Dr. Mary Beth Long, Thesis Director


Dr. Janice Duncan, Second Reader


Dr. Eric Goddard, Third Reader


Dr. Barbara Pemberton, Honors Program Director

April 15, 2011

he refuses to call it that) and loyalty to his maker, Godric, proving that at least some vestiges of his humanity remain after centuries of living at odds with human civilization.

Castiel, in the *Supernatural* series, is an angel and has thus never been human. As he develops a relationship with the Winchesters, however, he comes to doubt his orders from above—especially those that put little value on human lives—and he develops a growing compassion for humans. Castiel becomes increasingly human as he works with Sam and Dean to prevent Lucifer from escaping Hell's gates and beginning the Apocalypse; because he sides with the humans, he is cast out of heaven and loses some of his supernatural powers. Like the supernatural characters in the previously-mentioned tales, Castiel limits his own supernatural strength by allying himself with humans, by accepting their morals, and by valuing their lives. In each of these stories, then, the supernatural characters are bodily distinct from humans, yet retain elements of humanity, and it is this dualistic balance which supplies the necessary conflict in their plots and allows the audience to connect with their characters.

The Bonds of Love

Audiences feel still more connected with the supernatural characters in the tales as a result of the romantic relationships these characters develop with humans: for example, romances spring up between the fairy Presine and the human king Elinas, as well as between human waitress Sookie Stackhouse and vampire Bill Compton. There are, of course, different story-telling conventions between the medieval and contemporary tales, yet the overarching romances between mortals and immortals, humans and non-humans connect the tales from these distant time periods.

Unique to the medieval tales is the focus on conditional marriages between supernatural characters and mortals. This trope appears, for example, in Marie de France's *Lanval*, in which a

beautiful fairy grants a poor knight both her wealth and her love on the condition that he never reveal his relationship with her. The trope is also present in the agreements into which both Presine and Mélusine force their husbands-to-be in *Le Roman de Mélusine*. These medieval romances hinge not only on the conditions they form but also on the promises which the human lovers invariably break: Lanval speaks of his beloved, Elinas walks in on his wife and daughters, and Raymondin publicly denounces his wife as a serpent.

These broken promises serve, in my opinion, as further proof that Jean D'Arras, like other medieval authors, intentionally imbues his supernatural characters with redeeming qualities that prevent them from becoming mere monsters, for these medieval authors depict the human characters, rather than the supernatural ones, as blameworthy in their marital conflicts. When Elinas enters the forbidden room where Presine is bathing her three daughters, Presine is horrified and cries out, "*Faulx roys, tu m'as faille de convenant, dont il te mesavenra, et m'as perdue a tousjours mais*" (D'Arras 64). Elinas is the "faulx roys," or false king, and because he has broken his promise, they must be separated forevermore. Similarly, Raymondin is portrayed as the wrong-doer when he denounces Mélusine; his "verbal transgression...[is] a literally correct but spiritually inadequate description of Mélusine" (Brownlee 87). Raymondin and Geoffroy Great Tooth later atone for their crimes against Mélusine by following the penances outlined for them by the pope and other religious authorities, further confirming the idea that the shape-shifter Mélusine, rather than her human husband and son, is in the right: even the Catholic church affirms her character by acknowledging that Raymondin's outburst against her is unjust. The medieval trope of broken promises in contractual romances between humans and supernatural figures is critical to the series of events which eventually occur in *Mélusine* and similar tales, providing a main source of conflict which drives these stories forward.

Contemporary supernatural tales like *Twilight*, *True Blood* and *Supernatural* lack this particular element of medieval romance, and also seem to differ in terms of the genders of supernatural characters: female figures are generally the supernatural characters in medieval works like *Mélusine*, whereas the contemporary supernatural characters who develop romances with humans are generally male, such as the vampires Edward Cullen and Bill Compton or the shape-shifters Jacob Black and Sam Merlotte. It seems to me that this shift can be explained by the audiences the respective authors have in mind when composing their stories: while male fairies are certainly present in medieval tales (*Sir Orfeo*, for example, features a fairy king), supernatural characters are generally beautiful young women in possession of great wealth and power. This can presumably be explained by the fact that men were the predominant readers and writers of literature in the Middle Ages and, consequently, were more interested in reading about lovely female fairies than about male immortals. The opposite seems true for the contemporary tales: though their audiences include individuals outside these categories, the target market for the *Twilight* series is teenage girls. Given its audience, then, it is no surprise that the gender roles have flipped in the *Twilight* series, the assumption being that its readers will enjoy reading about and seeing a handsome, superhuman boy fall in love with an ordinary human girl precisely because they are themselves ordinary human girls. *True Blood* and *Supernatural* may have slightly broader target audiences, but nevertheless seem to be marketed toward women—especially as they frequently feature male actors posing shirtless—and both Stephenie Meyer and Charlaine Harris, the authors of the *Twilight* series and the Sookie Stackhouse books, respectively, are themselves women.

Ironically, given their largely feminine audiences, the contemporary tales of the supernatural seem more confined by stereotypical gender roles than do their medieval

counterparts. In *Twilight*, for example, the female lead character, Bella Swan, is presented as weak, vulnerable, and childlike (Platt 74-76), and her human body is “represented as clumsy, flawed, and inherently insufficient” compared to those of her vampire and werewolf friends (McGeough 87). In sharp contrast to *Le Roman de Mélusine*—in which the female fairy Presine defends Elinas from their angry daughters and the half-human, half-fairy woman Mélusine continually works to protect her husband and sons from misfortune—*Twilight*’s Bella is frequently portrayed as a damsel-in-distress who must be saved by her supernatural love interests, Edward Cullen and Jacob Black. At least one author has noted an additional stereotype exhibited in Meyer’s portrayals of Edward and Jacob as saviors and protectors for the feeble Bella, claiming that the “contrasting depiction of Bella’s suitors, with the white vampire as gentleman-hero and the native werewolf as an aggressive cad, accords to racialized stereotypes of white versus non-white behavior” (Wilson 68). While there are no deep, over-arching romances in *Supernatural*, the Winchester boys arguably play into some of the same traditional, chivalric stereotypes in their behavior toward fellow (female) hunters Ellen and Jo. Similarly, Sookie Stackhouse of the *True Blood* series—though far less helpless than Bella Swan (she reads human minds, radiates a mysterious electric current from her fingertips, and continually shows great courage against both human and non-human enemies)—must frequently be saved from danger by supernatural characters including Bill Compton, Sam Merlotte, Eric Northman, and Godric.

In spite of the differences which exist between the medieval and contemporary conventions in these supernatural romances, however, I have consistently been struck by the similarities between the tales: centuries after *Mélusine* was written, we are still telling stories about romances between mortals and immortals, and these stories contain many of the same

themes. In her essay “Taking a Bite Out of Love: The Myth of Romantic Love in the *Twilight* Series,” Tricia Clasen highlights four characteristics of romance between human and supernatural characters in this series which, I believe, also come to play in other supernatural tales discussed in this paper. The first “romantic myth” she discusses is that of love at first sight, stating that “instant attraction is the foundation of *Twilight*” and pointing out the powerful—if not quite romantic—connection between Bella and Edward from their first meeting, as well as the fact that “all of the Cullens formed instant connections with their mates” (Clasen 122). She also discusses the werewolf practice of “imprinting,” an instant and involuntary attraction to the individual’s soul mate (Clasen 122-123). This immediate romantic bond is also evident in *Mélu sine*: Elinas is “so love-stricken that he [can] barely maintain his calm” when he speaks to Presine, and she consents to marry him on the spot, so long as he agrees to the condition she proposes (D’Arras 63-65). Likewise, Raymondin is “overwhelmed by [Mélu sine’s] beauty” when they meet and, as soon as she assures him of her piety, he agrees to marry her and uphold the conditions she outlines (D’Arras 93-99). In the *True Blood* series, Sookie Stackhouse is immediately attracted to Bill Compton—the first vampire she has ever encountered—based on his combined novelty, good looks, and impenetrable thoughts. Bill, in turn, is interested in Sookie because she proves, from the first episode, to be remarkable in her compassion and beauty as well as in her ability to read human minds.

The second romantic myth Clasen highlights is the idea that love is eternal: in *Twilight*, “vampires mate for life...[and] for the wolves, imprinting suggests the same level of permanence” (Clasen 124). The conclusion of *Breaking Dawn* certainly implies that, having neutralized the Volturi threat, Bella and Edward, Jacob and Renesmee, and the other couples united instantly in the series will remain together forever. Although neither Presine nor

Mélusine may remain with their husbands after the men break the conditions on which their marriages are founded, both husbands and wives greatly mourn their separations: Elinas and Raymondín miss their wives until they die, and Presine and Mélusine will, presumably, continue to miss their husbands as long as they remain on earth. The *True Blood* series is still in progress, preventing us from knowing for certain whether or not Sookie and Bill will remain together forever, but their relationship has continued to withstand every obstacle—no matter how great—that it has yet encountered, giving the impression that they, too, will remain united in love as long as they exist.

Clasen's third romantic myth is the idea that romance is the most important relationship.

In the *Twilight* series,

Edward states that he has no desire to live if Bella die[s]. Upon her death, he plans to seek out a group of vampires called the Volturi...to destroy him. In *New Moon*, Bella's reaction to Edward breaking up with her also reveal[s] that loss of love is life-altering....The Cullens move away, leaving Bella so depressed that she is essentially nonfunctioning. Life holds little value for Bella without Edward. (Clasen 126)

Bella and Edward are so dependent on each other and on their relationship that separation, for them, is akin to death. This link between separation and death is also present in *Mélusine*; when Elinas breaks his promise to Presine and she leaves with their daughters, he is so brokenhearted that "[f]or a period of some eight years, he did nothing except grieve, moan, and sigh, greatly lamenting his loss of Presine whom he loved with true and faithful heart" (D'Arras 67). Presine, too, grieves ceaselessly for her lost love, mourning their separation so much that she curses her

own daughters for mistreating him. After Raymondin betrays Mélusine, she mourns the tragic effects their separation will inflict upon her, saying to her husband

Hadst thou not betrayed me, I'd have been spared from suffering and torment; I'd have lived out the course of my life like a normal woman, I'd have died a natural death, receiving all the sacraments. I'd have been entombed and buried in the church of Notre-Dame de Lusignan, and subsequently, rites marking the anniversary of my death would have been celebrated. But now thou hast cast me back into that dark penance into which I had been plunged for such a long time because of my misdeed. Now, because of thy betrayal, I shall have to endure that penance in suffering until Judgment Day. (D'Arras 599-601)

Though she, because of her curse, cannot literally die, she suffers greatly as a result of her separation from Raymondin and from the life she has built with him in Lusignan. Jean D'Arras makes it clear that Raymondin also suffers from this separation, writing that “even though [Raymondin] held out hope of seeing her again, the intensity of the pain in his heart was indescribable. And from that day forward, he was never again seen to laugh or show any sign of joy” (613). Raymondin's *joie de vivre* is henceforth absent in the tale—some part of him has seemingly died—and he soon isolates himself in Montserrat, where he remains until his literal death. Likewise, John and Mary Winchester—father and mother of Sam and Dean in the *Supernatural* series—are bonded by a love so great that, after the yellow-eyed demon kills Mary, John abandons his previous way of life and takes to the road. From her murder onward, he flirts constantly with death as he fights monsters and ghosts, recklessly heedless of his own safety and, at times, even the safety of his sons because the grief of his lost love is so great.

The fourth and final romantic myth Clasen finds in the *Twilight* series is the idea that “love requires mind reading,” or that one’s lover should know what they are thinking and feeling without having to be told (Clasen 128). She holds up the Cullen family as prime examples of this, linking the happiness of its couples—such as Jasper and Alice—to their ability to communicate nonverbally. Conversely, Bella and Edward struggle with this form of communication so much that the “primary conflict in their relationship stems from their misperceptions of each other’s intentions. Because Bella’s is the only mind Edward cannot read, their miscommunication stands out” (Clasen 129). Since their inability to sense their partner’s thoughts and emotions is problematic for Edward and Bella and since, when Bella learns to lift the shield that excludes Edward from her thoughts, he is overcome with joy and love, it seems clear that nonverbal knowledge of one’s romantic partner is prized in this series. Mélusine also demonstrates this type of knowledge about Raymondin; she knows his name and his grief about accidentally killing his uncle although he does not tell her, and it is because of this knowledge (and Raymondin’s faith that her knowledge does not spring from any malevolence) that the two eventually marry. In the *True Blood* series, this myth might at first seem to be disproven: Sookie, a Louisiana waitress who can read the minds of everyone in her town, is attracted to vampire Bill Compton precisely because she cannot read his mind, for she is tired of knowing what everyone thinks all the time; he, in turn, is intrigued by her insusceptibility to his vampire “glamouring.” Yet despite these obvious obstacles to their nonverbal communication, the two form critical mental links in other ways: when Bill saves Sookie by letting her drink his blood—which has healing properties—then drinks some of her blood to regain his strength, the couple forges a powerful connection. From this point onward, Bill can sense both Sookie’s whereabouts and her emotions and Sookie temporarily experiences the emotions and sensory perceptions of a

vampire. Though Sookie eventually returns to her former state of consciousness, Bill's permanent connection to her mind enables him to save her life as well as their relationship many a time.

Family Ties

Unsurprisingly, these supernatural tales also highlight the significance of family ties among their characters, an element closely related to the romantic bonds integral to their plots. In *Le Roman de Mélusine*, for example, Mélusine's character and situation can only be understood in relation to her lineage: she inherits the fairy nature of her mother, Presine, an inheritance which gives her powers beyond those of mere mortals, yet she also inherits the human nature of her father, Elinas. Because Mélusine and her sisters wrongly imprison their father in Brumborenlion—a transgression which their mother blames on the human weakness they have inherited from their father, telling Mélusine that “*La vertu du germe de ton pere, toy et les autres, eust attrait a sa nature humaine*” (D'Arras 70)—Presine forces her daughters to remain subject to supernatural law thereafter, a curse which is only possible because Presine herself is a fairy. It is, arguably, because family connections are so important in this tale that Mélusine and her sisters are punished so harshly for sinning against their father; though he has broken his promise and brought great misery to Presine, he is still family.

Just as Mélusine, Melior, and Palestine simultaneously inherit the different natures of their parents, Mélusine's children also bear the marks of their mixed human and fairy descent. All of Mélusine's and Raymondin's sons except the youngest two are born with slight deformities documenting their not-entirely-human lineage: lion paw-shaped birthmarks, hairy moles, protruding teeth, and atypical numbers of eyes, among other oddities, give testament to the fact that the boys' mother is not a human. The sons are handsome in spite of their flaws, but

are certainly far from perfect; Geoffroy, like his mother and aunts before him, commits a great sin against the monks at Maillezais which is magnified because he commits it against his own family: his brother, Fromont, is among the monks' number. When Raymondin learns what Geoffroy has done, he grieves for Fromont and blames Mélusine for Geoffroy's crime, crying

Oh Geoffroy!... You had the finest beginnings in valor and chivalry—the greatest promise for attaining honor—of any prince's son living. And now you are completely undone because of your cruelty. By the faith I owe to God, I believe that that woman [Mélusine] is only an evil spirit. No fruit that she has borne will ever come to any good! Every child she has brought into the world bears some strange mark. (D'Arras 593)

Shortly thereafter, Raymondin denounces Mélusine as a "*tres faulse serpente*" (D'Arras 596), thus breaking the condition of their marriage and bringing about their permanent separation. The two interlocking rings Mélusine gives Raymondin for protection in battle and her promise to return to Lusignan three days before the fortress changes lords or one of her descendants dies demonstrate still further the critical importance of family ties within this work, as do Raymondin's quest to regain the honor stolen from his father, Hervé de Leon, and Raymondin's and Mélusine's sons' fraternal loyalties which enable them to defeat the Saracens and other enemies they encounter during their adventures together. Whether purely human or mixed human-supernatural figures, the characters in *Mélusine* undeniably form close family ties.

These bonds are echoed in contemporary supernatural tales like *Twilight*, *True Blood*, and *Supernatural*. For example, the *Twilight* werewolves inherit their ability to change shapes from their fathers, and they refer to their fellow pack-members as their "brothers." Similarly, the vampires in the Cullen family, though not biologically related, draw their identity from their

From the Middle Ages to Modernity: The Intersecting Supernatural Worlds of *Mélusine* and Today's Popular Culture

While some may scoff at fairy tales as juvenile, primitive, or superstitious, they have always held a special fascination for me, and I am not alone in this—stories about magicians, monsters, and mythical creatures have captivated their audiences' imaginations for thousands of years. Feeling myself consistently drawn toward this type of story, I began several months ago to study supernatural tales from the medieval era as well as those popular today, and I have since discovered numerous worlds in which the natural and supernatural coexist. Creatures seemingly human are, in fact, sometimes more—or less, depending on one's perspective. Families are cursed, friendships and romances spring up among mortals and fairies, vampires, and other fantastic ilk, and things are rarely as they seem.

Among these stories, my research has focused on *Le Roman de Mélusine* or *L'Histoire de Lusignan*, a fourteenth-century Middle French tale composed by Jean D'Arras. This work contains many elements common to supernatural tales of its time—shape-shifting, magic fountains and marriages between humans and fairies—yet it is also surprisingly relevant to our own age, whose popular culture is saturated with modern myths and vampire love-stories. Intrigued by the similarities between this medieval tale and the books, movies, and television shows currently prominent in our own culture, I began to look more closely at the parallels that exist between the two and to wonder how and why these same types of stories have continued to hold their audiences spellbound across the centuries. Before I enter into more detailed discussions of these questions, however, I must recognize that many in my own audience are unfamiliar with the tale of *Mélusine* as well as with the twenty-first century supernatural tales included in this paper; consequently, I am including short summaries of each major work I have

family unit: Carlisle, the eldest as well as the one responsible for turning his “son” Edward and wife Esme into vampires, is recognized as the father. The family’s strong bonds lie in strict contrast to the typical relationships between vampires, which are easily broken, leading one character to hypothesize that “abstaining from human blood makes us stronger—lets us form true bonds of love” (*Breaking Dawn* 603). Renesmee, like Mélusine’s children, shows clear physical evidence of her mixed heritage: she is immortal like her vampire father, Edward, while at the same time possessing a human heart like her mortal mother, Bella. In fact, her very name reveals the close bonds she has with her family: Renesmee is a combination of the names of her human grandmother, Renee, and her vampire grandmother, Esme, while her middle name, Carlie, is formed from the names of Carlisle, her vampire grandfather, and Charlie, her human grandfather.

Family ties are also critical to the plot of the *True Blood* series: vampires like Bill, Eric, and Jessica are closely connected with their makers, the vampires who turned them. When Godric—the vampire sheriff in charge of the Dallas area—goes missing, Eric enlists Sookie’s help to find him. Curious about why Eric is so eager to find Godric, Bill and Sookie eventually discover that Godric is Eric’s maker; he turned the former Viking, Eric, into a vampire over 1,000 years ago, and the two have a very close bond. While Bill is less fond of his own maker, the beautiful but heartless Lorena, he remains undeniably connected to her: when Lorena tries to sabotage Bill’s relationship with Sookie, he is unable to overpower her because of the bond between them. Bill is furious with Lorena but is powerless to break their connection and, because he resents their relationship so much, he resolves to be a better maker for his own young vampire charge, Jessica. Yet, as in *Mélusine*, supernatural characters are not the only ones linked by close bonds: Sookie and her brother Jason acknowledge that, though they often

frustrate one another, they must stick together and help each other in the midst of their trials. Both grieve deeply at their grandmother's death, and this grief helps them grow still closer. Sookie's best friend, Tara, is also closely connected with her mother, Lettie Mae, and her cousin, Lafayette; though all three get involved in various kinds of trouble, they continue to help each other out of difficult and dangerous predicaments, proving their convictions that families should stick together.

In the *Supernatural* series, too, family bonds play a critical role in driving the plot: John Winchester's quest to destroy evil supernatural beings, including the yellow-eyed demon, begins because the demon murders his wife, Mary. Sam and Dean, too, are drawn into the world of supernatural hunters as a result of their mother's murder, and their strong fraternal bond quite literally keeps them alive during their encounters with ghosts, werewolves, and other evil figures. Though Sam and Dean, like all siblings, have their differences, no disagreement is strong enough to separate them for long: the brothers even cheat death to be together. Their fraternal bond is echoed by that between the arch-angel Michael and the fallen angel Lucifer; in fact, Sam and Dean are chosen as Lucifer's and Michael's ideal vessels, respectively, precisely because of their close brotherly relationship.

The Fairy Tale Appeal

So what is it about these supernatural tales—with their liminal settings, mythical characters, inter-species romances, and close family connections—that continues to captivate audiences across centuries, continents, and gender lines? The theories seem to be as varied as the scholars and thinkers who devise them, but several key philosophies consistently emerge. Part of the reason we read books (or watch films and television shows) from any genre is to escape from reality, if only for a moment. This desire to escape is especially present in

supernatural tales (whether they're termed "myths," "fairy tales," "romances," or something else altogether) because their worlds exist simultaneously within and outside of the so-called real world. For some, the desire to engage with these tales arises because they long to "escape from a mundane existence" (Clasen 119), while others sense that these supernatural stories represent a "challengingly persistent suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told" (Campbell 1). People wish to move beyond their own immediate physical realities so they may ascertain truths outside of their limited experiences, and these tales make this possible by enabling audiences to love, laugh with, learn from, and live through their characters.

I have come to believe that we also love fairy tales and stories about the supernatural because they stretch our imaginations, allowing us to temporarily suspend the laws of science and the tenets of reason in order to regain a sense of mystery and wonder about our world. Bruno Bettelheim seems to have this sentiment in mind when he writes that "nothing can be as enriching and satisfying to child and adult alike as the...fairy tale" (5). Audiences, it seems, do not want everything to be predictable or explainable because we grow bored with always knowing what comes next; we want to dream about falling in love with beautiful fairies or handsome vampires, conquering monstrous foes, or exercising magical abilities, as the case may be. We become absorbed in these stories because we "sense that they can help us reach our destiny....[F]airy tales present a challenge, for within the tales lies the hope of self-transformation and a better world" (Zipes ix). These supernatural stories "carry the human spirit forward" (Campbell 7) and "create a vision of what 'ought' to be rather than what 'is'" (Clasen 120). One scholar goes so far as to say that this imagination-stretching is not merely a motivation for us to interact with these stories, but rather the essence of their existence, claiming

that “[a]s a romancer, [Mélusine] seeks to impose otherworld dimensions of seeing, seeing not what is really here but what desire foists on everyday reality, what desire wishes the world were like, for that’s what phantasm really means” (Nichols 149). Whether or not this aspect of supernatural tales forms their essence, it seems to be an unmistakable part of their allure.

Yet, paradoxically, I believe that these tales also fascinate us because they tell *our* stories, because we recognize that, despite their appearances, the characters in these tales are more like us than they are different. Though some argue that “[t]he figures in fairy tales are not ambivalent—not good and bad at the same time, as we all are in reality” (Bettelheim 9), I find the opposite to be true in the tales I’ve studied as part of this project. The fairies, vampires, shape-shifters, and other characters in *Le Roman de Mélusine*, *Twilight*, *True Blood*, and *Supernatural* battle the same dualities we face daily: good and evil, morality and immorality, love and hate, life and death. We sympathize with them because we, too, know what it means to have a dual nature: we possess reason, yet often act according to our emotions; we try to love others, but are often our most churlish around our closest family and friends; we, as the apostle Paul confesses, do not do the good we want to do, but instead do the very things we want most to avoid. Thus we can sympathize with the plights of those “monsters” who choose to fight their fates, though they may lose their battles in the end. We cheer for the vampires who choose not to kill humans, for the angels who question orders that don’t seem to reflect God’s goodness and love, and for fairies and magical half-serpents who decide to live with the humans they love though doing so puts them at risk for eternally broken hearts. Humanity, I believe, serves as the basis for the supernatural in these fantastic works: supernatural beings are deemed “good” or “bad” based on human standards of morality and conscience and, because these characters are held to the same standards we possess, we can recognize their humanity and relate to them in a

way we could not if they remained wholly separate and other. It is, then, a combination of the otherworldly and the ordinary, the supernatural and the human that seems to draw us to these tales about magic, monsters, and mythical beings; the duality of the settings and characters in these tales draws us because we also see duality in our own lives and that, in my opinion, is the true fairy tale appeal.

Appendix A: Overview of *Le Roman de Mélusine*

Long ago, a noble king of Scotland, Elinas, went hunting in a forest near the sea. There he heard an enchanting song and, following the sound, came upon a beautiful woman. The king was so taken by her beauty and her song that he stood, rooted to the spot for a long while; when he finally moved again, the woman took notice of him and began to converse with him. King Elinas soon confessed his love to the woman, whose name was Presine, and she agreed to marry him on one condition: namely that, should they have children, he would never try to see her during her lying-in. He agreed, and Presine eventually gave birth to three daughters: Mélusine, Melior, and Palestine. Unfortunately, Elinas forgot his promise in his excitement to see his wife with their new children and entered her room unannounced. Because Elinas broke his promise, Presine took her three daughters and vanished, fleeing to Avalon.

Years later, when her daughters reach the age of fifteen, Presine takes them to a mountaintop from which they can see Scotland, revealing to them the inheritance they would have had had their father not broken his promise. Angered by this story, the sisters—led by the eldest, Mélusine—decide to imprison their father in an enchanted mountain in Northumberland known as Brumborenlion. The daughters use magic to carry out their misguided plan, then tell their mother what they have done to avenge her for Elinas's broken promise. Furious at their wicked deed—for she still loves Elinas very much—Presine curses her daughters: Mélusine is to become a serpent from the waist down every Saturday. She is permitted to marry, if her husband agrees never to see her on the days when she shifts forms or, if he does see her, agrees not to tell anyone. So long as he keeps this promise, she will live a normal, mortal life, and even if he doesn't, she will give birth to a powerful line. Melior, Presine's second daughter, is to be imprisoned in a castle in Greater Armenia to keep eternal watch over a sparrow-hawk. She may

grant to any knight who comes and keeps watch, on a certain night of the year, the material gift of his choosing. She can not marry, however, and should any knight request her hand, he will be cursed. Palestine, the youngest daughter, is to be enclosed in Mount Canigou with her father's treasure, remaining there until a knight of her own lineage arrives, uses the treasure to conquer the Holy Land, and sets her free. King Elinas remains imprisoned in Brumborenlion until his death, when Presine encloses him in a magnificent tomb guarded by a fierce giant.

The tale then shifts to the story of Raymondin, a noble young Breton who wins the love and respect of his good and powerful uncle, Count Aymeri. The count is very fond of hunting, and one day engages the help of his nephew and many other men to track a ferocious boar through the forest. The boar mauls several of the company's hunting dogs, putting up such a fight that some of the men become dismayed by its ferocity. Raymondin, however, becomes angry at the boar and, anxious that it should not disgrace the company by escaping, he turns his horse and gives chase. Count Aymeri, concerned for his nephew's safety, calls out to stop him; when Raymondin continues his pursuit, the count follows him and the two become separated from the rest of the men as the day turns to night. As darkness falls, Count Aymeri and Raymondin begin to set up camp. While Raymondin builds a fire, the count looks up into the sky and reads his fate in the stars: that very night, Raymondin will accidentally kill him and inherit his fortune and prestige. Aymeri tells his nephew what he has discovered, but Raymondin chides him and tells him he has many years left to live. Soon, however, the men hear the boar rustling in the woods and Raymondin leaps upon it, killing the boar but also inadvertently killing his uncle with his spear.

Appalled by what he has done, the grieving Raymondin flees through the forest, so blinded by his despair that he neither knows nor cares where he goes. In this state, he comes

upon three ladies bathing at the *Fontaine de Soif* but does not notice them. One of the ladies comes up to him and speaks to him, shaking him from his reverie. He is so taken aback by her beauty that he jumps off his horse and apologizes for his rude behavior, explaining that his present circumstances are very grave. The lady nods, for she knows of his difficulties, and tells him not to worry because she will help him. Astonished that she knows so much about him but taken in by her beauty, Raymondin agrees to let her help him as long as her motives are good. The lady—who is none other than Mélusine, daughter of Presine—assures him of her piety and goodness, and agrees to marry him and advance all his interests if he'll agree never to see her on Saturdays. He consents, and she tells him exactly what to do; he follows her instructions, and the two eventually wed and construct the noble fortress of Lusignan.

After they are married, Mélusine helps Raymondin reclaim the land and honor of his father, Hervé de Leon, from the vile Josselin de Pont de Leon. While he is engaged on this adventure, she finishes constructing the strong and lovely city of Lusignan. The two give birth, over the years, to ten handsome sons, most of whom are born with distinguishing marks: Urien, the eldest, has a short, wide face, large ears, one red eye and one greenish-blue; Eudes, the second son, has one ear that is larger than the other; Guy, the third, has one eye higher than the other; Antoine, the fourth, has a hairy, lion paw-shaped birthmark on one cheek; Renaud, the fifth, is born with only one eye; Geoffroy, the sixth, is known as “Great Tooth” because he has one tooth that sticks out nearly an inch; Fromont, the seventh son, has a hairy mole on one side of his nose; and Horrible, the eighth, has three eyes, is incredibly tall, and is so wicked that he kills two nurses before his fourth birthday. The last two sons, Raymonnet and Thierry, are not said to have blemishes or marks of any kind.

Mélusine and Raymondin love and raise their children as well as they can, and the young men have many adventures. Urien and Guy, for example, set out together to fight in a Crusade, eventually becoming the kings of Cyprus and Armenia, respectively. Antoine and Renaud, also seeking knightly honors, undertake a quest to save a maiden in peril, and come to inherit the dukedom of Luxembourg and the kingdom of Bohemia. Geoffroy Great Tooth—huge, brave, and cruel—conquers the wicked lords of Sion in Ireland to avenge their effrontery against his father, and aids his brothers Urien and Guy in another Crusade against the Saracens. Meanwhile, Raymondin is persuaded by his brother, the count of Forez, to spy on Mélusine one Saturday. He sees that, from the waist down, she has the body of a serpent, and he is greatly saddened because he feels he has betrayed his beloved by spying on her. Raymondin angrily bids his brother leave and, grief-stricken, awaits the return of his wife. Though she knows he has seen her, she does nothing, for Raymondin has not told anyone about her curse, and the two remain happy together.

The tale then returns to Geoffroy Great Tooth, who heroically defeats a cruel giant but then becomes so infuriated by the news that his younger brother, Fromont, has become a monk at Maillezais that he sets out for the abbey in great haste. When he arrives, he sets fire to the abbey, killing all the monks—including his brother—who are inside. Geoffroy then laments his wicked deed, and, when his father hears what has happened, his grief is so great that he becomes maddened and denounces his wife as a “tres faulse serpente” (596). With this remark, Raymondin breaks his promise to Mélusine, so she is overtaken with grief and is forced to leave forever, living in penance until Judgment Day for sinning against her father. She leaves final instructions—including the order that their wicked son, Horrible, be quietly killed to prevent great destruction—then she gives Raymondin two protective, magical rings and tells him the

story of her curse. When she finishes, she flies out of the window, turns into an enormous serpent, and departs, wailing in despair, for she still loves Raymondin with all her heart.

Haunted by his deed, Geoffroy Great Tooth embarks on another adventure, this time hoping to kill a giant at Brumborenlion who has been terrorizing those who live nearby. While Geoffroy pursues the giant, he comes across the glorious tomb of King Elinas and sees his mother's name there. He reads the story of her curse and discovers that the giant had been stationed there to guard the place until one of Mélusine's descendents comes to drive him away. Geoffroy defeats the giant, then learns of the tragic parting of his parents. Rather than blaming himself for all that has occurred, he feels that his uncle, the count of Forez, is at fault for encouraging Raymondin to spy on Mélusine. So Geoffroy confronts his uncle, and the count, afraid for his life, tries to flee from Geoffroy; in so doing, he falls from the roof and dies on the rocks below. Raymondin, greatly saddened by this news, seeks reconciliation with Geoffroy to prevent further catastrophe. Then Raymondin—bequeathing Lusignan to his youngest son, Thierry, as Mélusine had instructed him to do—leaves to live the life of a saintly hermit at Montserrat in Aragon. He remains there until his death, and is fully reconciled with his son Geoffroy, who continues to defend his father's honor.

The tale concludes with the story of one of King Guy's descendents in Armenia. This young king hears tell of a beautiful lady, imprisoned in a tower, who stands guard over a sparrow-hawk and will grant any material gift to a knight who holds vigil there for three days and three nights without falling asleep. Though he knows it is not permitted, the knight intends to ask for the lady's hand in marriage, and accordingly sets out for the castle and completes the trial. When the lady asks him what he wants, he asks for her love; though she warns him to reconsider his request, he persists, and consequently a curse falls upon the king and his

studied so at the end of this paper, in hopes that these appendices will acquaint my readers with the tales and make my insights into their parallels and appeal more apparent.

Setting the Scene

Mélusine's story—like other medieval tales and, indeed, like many supernatural stories today—takes place in a land which is, at once, part of a very real medieval Europe and part of an otherworldly realm in which supernatural beings mingle with ordinary humans. We are introduced to this liminal land when Presine and Mélusine meet their husbands-to-be beside fountains, places which are often connected with magic in medieval romances; beside these magic fountains, the foundations of the tale are established: Elinas, held spellbound by Presine's song, finally comes out of his reverie near the fountain. He is very thirsty and, forgetting his previous desire to remain hidden, he comes down to the spring to take a drink. This act calls him to Presine's attention, after which the two begin talking and eventually agree to marry. The magical properties and bewitching beauty of the *Fontaine de Soif*, by which Raymondin encounters Mélusine and her attendants, are described more explicitly:

[S]ome called it the Enchanted Fountain, because there had happened there in olden times—at times even on a daily basis—many a wondrous adventure. The water came forth in a spot of most striking appearance; here was a wild, precipitous slope with great boulders above, giving onto a beautiful prairie skirting a valley; then rose the high timbered forest. The moon glowed brightly, and Raymondin's horse carried him...wherever it wanted, for Raymondin, plunged into his great despair, had no more direction in mind than if he'd been sound asleep. (D'Arras 91)

descendants which remains even until the day when the author of the tale pens the account recorded in the "true chronicles" (717).

Appendix B: Overview of the *Twilight* Series

The *Twilight* series focuses on Isabella, called Bella, Swan, a high school student who moves from sunny Phoenix, Arizona to the small, drizzly town of Forks, Washington to live with her father, Charlie. Charlie, the police chief, is good friends with Billy Black, a wheelchair-bound man of the Quileute tribe, and Bella has vague memories of playing with Billy's daughters and younger son, Jacob. However, the Blacks live on the nearby reservation, so Bella begins school without knowing a soul. That soon changes, of course, and she eventually comes in contact with the Cullen family. Dr. Carlisle Cullen and his wife, Esme, are young, wealthy, and extraordinarily beautiful, as are their five adopted children, Emmet, Rosalie, Jasper, Alice, and Edward. The Cullens are not very popular, however, especially among the Quileutes, and Bella can't help but notice their strangeness.

She becomes increasingly attracted to the youngest son, Edward, from whom she gets very mixed signals. Eventually, he saves her from a scary situation and she learns that he can read minds—all except hers, that is, an astonishing discovery which is soon eclipsed by the still more astonishing discovery that the Cullens are vampires who possess superhuman strength and live forever, unless they are killed (much like Tolkien's elves), a task which is very hard to perform. She also learns that Edward is particularly attracted to her scent; his strange behavior has been the result of his struggle not to harm her, for he is as interested in her as she is in him. Instead of being frightened by these discoveries, Bella is intrigued, for the Cullens are "vegetarian" vampires who survive on animal blood to avoid killing humans, and she firmly believes that Edward will never harm her. Her faith in Edward and his family is strengthened when they save her from a vicious (non-vegetarian) vampire named James, who tries to kill her to get to Edward.

Edward, on the other hand, is so alarmed by the danger he has put her in—from James, from James's living mate, Victoria, and even from his own family—that he decides to leave Bella in order to keep her safe. Bella, who had hoped Edward would turn her into a vampire so they could be together always, is heartbroken when Edward leaves; during his absence, her friendship with Jacob Black is the only thing keeping her sane—until she discovers the reason the Quileutes hate Edward's family so much: they're werewolves, mortal enemies of vampires. Torn between Jacob and Edward—and faced, in the meantime, with death at the hands of the vengeful Victoria—Bella becomes increasingly desperate and takes up reckless behavior including motorcycle-riding and cliff-diving. Edward, mistakenly believing that Bella has died in one of these reckless acts, travels to Italy, where the vampire law-keepers, known as the Volturi, live, hoping to persuade them to kill him. When Bella learns about this, she risks permanent estrangement from Jacob to save Edward; though she successfully prevents his death, the Volturi learn about Bella. Intrigued by her ability to thwart their special gifts—like Edward's mind-reading—they spare her life on the condition that the Cullens agree to change Bella into a vampire in the near future. Edward grudgingly consents, for he wants Bella to retain her humanity, and they return to Forks.

Back at home, Bella and Jacob try to save their precarious friendship, for Jacob confesses his love for Bella and she, though in love with Edward, can't break off her friendship with Jacob because he has stuck with her through some rough times. The werewolves and vampires briefly put aside their differences to fight Victoria, who reemerges with a pack of about twenty newborn—and thus, especially bloodthirsty—vampires intent on killing Bella to avenge James's death. The Cullens suspect that the Volturi are also somehow involved in this vampire attack, for they seem to fear the Cullen family; this suspicion is confirmed when the Volturi show up

just after the fight, and marvel that the Cullens have made it through unscathed, for they are unaware of the part played by the werewolves. The brief alliance between vampires and werewolves is broken, however, when Edward agrees to turn Bella into a vampire if she promises to marry him first, for Bella's transformation will break the pact between the Quileutes and the Cullens, essentially beginning a war between them.

Bella and Edward marry but, before Edward can turn Bella into a vampire, they discover that she is pregnant with a rapidly-growing, half-human and half-vampire child. About a month after conceiving, Bella gives birth to Renesmee, an extraordinary little girl who seems to embody the best characteristics of each of her parents; afterward, Edward turns Bella into a vampire to save her from her arduous delivery (for vampires are much stronger than humans). The werewolves are intent on killing the child until Jacob bonds with her through the mysterious process of "imprinting," after which his pack will no longer consider harming her. They soon face bigger problems when the Volturi—falsely assuming that Renesmee is dangerous and vowing to wipe out the Cullen family for bringing her into the world—journey to Forks with an army of "witnesses." Their plan backfires, however, when they learn that Renesmee is not dangerous and their witnesses discover that the Volturi have lied to them; ultimately the Cullens, the werewolves, and the many vampires who have decided to side with them pose such a threat to the Volturi that they leave without fighting, and the Cullens and the Quileutes remain, now safe and happy.

Appendix C: Overview of *True Blood*

The HBO television series *True Blood*, based on *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* novels by Charlaine Harris, takes place in the Louisiana town of Bon Temps. Sookie Stackhouse, the main protagonist in the series, is a human waitress at Merlot's restaurant and bar. She can also, as it happens, read the minds of all her family, friends, coworkers, and customers—until the night Bill Compton, Bon Temps' first vampire, walks in, that is. Because Japanese scientists have developed a blood substitute—called True Blood—that satisfies the nutritional needs of vampires without requiring them to kill humans, this formerly-hidden group has now “come out of the coffin” to mix openly with humans. Though vampires are still markedly different from people—they cannot come out during the day, they're powerless against silver, they are remarkably strong and fast, they possess heightened senses, and they can “glamour” humans into thinking and acting differently—the vampires have begun to enter into mainstream business and politics, causing some humans to fear their growing influence.

Sookie is not one of these humans; she welcomes Bill immediately, waiting graciously on him and protecting him from two of her human customers who attempt to steal his blood (which can be sold on the black market as the powerful drug “V”). She becomes still more attracted to Bill when she learns that she can't read his mind, and he is equally intrigued to learn that he cannot glamour her; the two make a date to meet again and get to know one another better. Before they can, the humans who previously captured Bill corner Sookie and beat her to within an inch of her life as revenge for her preventing them from stealing Bill's blood. Bill arrives just in time to save Sookie and gives her some of his blood to help her heal, thus forming an intimate bond between them that enables Bill to know where Sookie is at all times and to sense her emotions. Sookie's boss, Sam Merlotte, supports vampire rights but is uneasy about the growing

romance between Sookie and Bill, for he has wanted to date Sookie for a long time. In fact, almost all of Sookie's friends, coworkers, and family members disapprove of her relationship with Bill; only her Gran encourages it, because she believes it makes Sookie happy.

Bill Compton's arrival in Bon Temps is not the only strange activity which takes place in the show's first season, however; a series of violent murders shocks the small town, and the police find evidence of vampire bites on each of the young, female victims. Bill Compton, the new vampire in town, is initially a suspect but when the police determine that the vampire bites did not cause their victims' deaths, Sookie's brother Jason—who is known throughout the town as a womanizer who's been involved in relationships with each of the dead women—becomes the chief suspect. In an attempt to clear her brother's name and find out who the real killer is, Sookie accompanies Bill to the vampire bar Fangtasia, where she is exposed to the sub-culture of humans who seek sexual relationships with vampires ("fang-bangers") and learns about the hierarchy of power within the vampire community.

At Fangtasia, Sookie meets Eric Northman, the vampire sheriff of their region, and questions him about the murders in Bon Temps. Intrigued by Sookie's mind-reading abilities, Eric then commissions her to help him uncover a thief among his human employees; when she discovers that another vampire is to blame for the missing money, the culprit tries to kill her, but Bill saves Sookie by killing her attacker first. When Sookie and Bill return to Bon Temps, they find Sookie's Gran, Adele Stackhouse, murdered in her kitchen. Torn between his need to protect Sookie and his summons to appear before the Vampire Magister for his crime of killing a fellow vampire, Bill entrusts Sookie to Sam's protection while he goes to find out his punishment. During Bill's absence, Sookie discovers that there is more to Sam than meets the eye: she awakes during the night to find that the friendly dog she's invited into her house is

actually Sam, a shape-shifter who often adopts a canine form (though he can take others).

Meanwhile, Jason Stackhouse awakes to find his girlfriend, Amy, dead beside him; convinced that he somehow killed her while high on V (though he remembers nothing), he turns himself in. Sookie, greatly shaken up by all that has happened and fearing that she—a vampire sympathizer like all those who’ve been killed—will be next, embarks on another mission to clear Jason’s name and find out who’s really behind the murders. With Sam’s help, she discovers a clue: the name Drew Marshall. During Sookie’s search for the murderer, Bill is forced to change a young human girl, Jessica, into a vampire as punishment for killing another of his kind; after completing his sentence, he entrusts Jessica into Eric’s care and speeds back to Bon Temps.

Sookie finally solves the mystery regarding the town’s murders when Rene Lanier, one of her brother’s closest friends and the fiancé of her coworker Arlene, drives her home from work: Rene forgets for a moment to guard his thoughts, and Sookie reads his mind, discovering that he is Drew Marshall, a fugitive who killed his own sister because he considered her a “fang-banger” and who, despite creating a new name and new life in Bon Temps, never got over his hatred of vampire-sympathizers. Rene/Drew reveals that he never meant to kill Adele Stackhouse; he’d come after Sookie, and her Gran had merely gotten in the way. Before he can kill Sookie, too, she flees. Sam comes to help her but Rene/Drew attacks him first, and Bill, sensing Sookie’s danger, braves the sunlight to come to her aid. The sun scorches his skin, however, and renders him helpless; ultimately Sookie kills her attacker with a shovel, and she and Sam cover Bill with dirt to protect him from further sun damage.

In season two, a fully-recovered Bill is forced to accept responsibility for his new “daughter,” Jessica, and Sookie is pulled farther into the world of vampire politics when Eric asks for her help in finding Godric, a powerful vampire sheriff who has gone missing. She goes

with Bill, Eric, and Jessica to Dallas to help search for Godric, whom the vampires believe has been kidnapped by the radical, anti-vampire Fellowship of the Sun Church. Busy helping search for Godric, Bill and Sookie fail to realize the magnitude of events happening back in Bon Temps: Jason is recruited by and eventually joins the Fellowship of the Sun, and a maenad—one of the mythic wild women associated with the god Dionysus—named Maryann comes in search of Sam and causes great chaos in the town.

The action in Dallas comes to a head when Bill discovers Eric's motivation for finding Godric: the missing sheriff is Eric's maker, the one who turned him into a vampire over 1,000 years ago. Bill is reminded only too clearly of the powerful bonds between vampires and their makers when Eric, who longs for a more intimate relationship with Sookie, calls in Bill's maker, Lorena, to imprison Bill in his hotel room, thus preventing Bill from going to Sookie's aid when she is captured by the Fellowship of the Sun. When Eric goes to save her, he also finds Godric and learns that his maker was not captured but turned himself in to the Fellowship in an attempt to reconcile humans and vampires. Now the Fellowship wants to kill Godric, Eric, and Sookie, and the vampire community in Dallas is none too happy about it: they organize a force to destroy the Fellowship of the Sun, and only Godric's influence prevents a war between the two sides. When he learns of Sookie's danger, Jason abandons the Fellowship and comes to help rescue her; however Luke, one of the other Fellowship recruits, finds no similar reasons to sympathize with the vampires and sacrifices himself to the anti-vampire cause when he comes to Godric's home and detonates the silver-filled bomb strapped to his chest, killing several vampires and injuring many others. Eric is among the injured, having thrown himself in front of Sookie to save her; he exploits the situation by convincing her to suck out the silver bullets

which have lodged in his chest, thereby forcing her to drink some of his blood and forming a new connection with her.

Bill and Sookie are both furious with Eric, but soon discover that they have bigger problems: Godric decides to “meet the sun” at dawn, killing himself, and in the meantime, the situation back in Bon Temps escalates to new heights: Maryann is planning to sacrifice Sam to Dionysus as part of a mythical wedding ceremony uniting her to her god, and she enlists the entire town to help her accomplish her evil plan. Bill and Eric both seek the assistance of Sophie-Anne, the Vampire Queen of Louisiana, to learn how to put an end to Maryann’s mischief, and eventually Bill and Sam hatch a winning plan: they allow Maryann to sacrifice Sam but, as Sookie distracts Maryann, Sam drinks some of Bill’s blood—which allows him to heal—then shape-shifts into a large, white bull. Maryann, thinking the bull is Dionysus, runs to it and Sam gores her with his horns, killing her. The second season (which is as far as I’ve watched) ends on a cliff-hanger: Bill proposes to Sookie, who becomes flustered and retreats into the bathroom for a moment to calm down. While she’s in the bathroom, Sookie decides to accept Bill’s offer but, when she returns to tell him, he’s gone: he’s been kidnapped.

Appendix D: Overview of *Supernatural*

The *Supernatural* television series, which originally aired on the Warner Brothers network in 2005 and now airs on the CW, follows the lives of the Winchester brothers, Sam and Dean. The brothers are “hunters”; after their mother mysteriously dies, young Sam and Dean go on the road with their father, John, an ex-Marine who now hunts monsters. They are raised on the road as their father drives around the nation, looking for cases of supernatural beings—vampires, werewolves, ghosts, demons, ghouls, and a host of other creatures—and, when he finds them, exterminating them. When the show begins, the eldest brother, Dean, is still hunting with his father, but Sam has broken away from the “family business” to attend Stanford, hoping to go to law school. He soon abandons this dream, however; he returns home to find his girlfriend, Jessica, has been killed in the same fashion as his mother, then rejoins his brother to chase evil creatures in their black '67 Impala.

Together, Sam and Dean fight a host of strange and terrifying beings, while John searches for clues that may explain his wife’s death all those years ago, eventually discovering that she was killed by a malicious, yellow-eyed demon. Sam, Dean, and John set out to kill the demon, but the plan is thwarted when Dean is injured, and John forfeits his own life to the demon in order to save his son. Sam begins to have headaches and visions, seeing peoples’ deaths before they happen, so the brothers seek to save these victims before they perish. They discover that Sam’s powers, like their mother’s death, are connected to the yellow-eyed demon, and enlist the help of family friend (and fellow hunter) Bobby Singer in finding and killing this demon. In the process, Sam and others like him—who were visited by the demon as infants and who fit into his plan to free the Devil—are kidnapped, and Sam is killed. Desperate to save Sam, Dean makes a deal with a demon: he trades his soul for Sam’s resurrection, and is left with only one year to

Raymondin, then, never consciously decides to come to the fountain; just as the spell of Presine's song draws Elinas to her fountain, Raymondin's horse—led, perhaps, by the lovely scenery lit by the glowing moon or perhaps by the Enchanted Fountain itself—brings him to Mélusine unawares. It seems clear, then, that both the fountains by which Presine and Elinas, then Mélusine and Raymondin, meet and the meetings themselves belong to the supernatural realm which is both separate from and included in the historical locale of medieval Europe.

Yet the forest-surrounded fountains we should “recognize as sites of exchange between the world of humans and creatures of the uncertain realms that lie beyond mortal ken” (Spiegel 100) are not the only liminal places present in the tale. After Elinas breaks his promise to Presine, she flees with her daughters to the “Isle of Avalon, also called the Lost Isle, because none could ever find their way back to it, no matter how many times they'd been there, except by chance” (D'Arras 67). The enchanted island of Avalon is present in many medieval romances, and it certainly adds to the liminal settings established in *Mélusine*. Kevin Brownlee points out another instance in which the story's liminal location highlights Mélusine's supernatural character:

The end of the reciprocal farewell scene between Mélusine and Raymondin is signaled as she changes her physical location, moving to a windowsill—an intermediate space that isolates her both from Raymondin and from the assembled courtly multitude. It is from this liminal space that Mélusine will deliver the last (and quantitatively different) part of her final speech, already, as it were, halfway between her human and her serpentine form, as she is (within the stylized spatial configuration of the scene) halfway between the floor and the sky. (90)

live. Bobby and the Winchester boys ultimately succeed in killing the yellow-eyed demon, but find that they now have bigger problems: not only is Dean running out of time, but the gates of Hell have also opened, and a host of demons escape before the hunters can shut them again.

Among the escapees are Lillith, a particularly evil demon bent on releasing Lucifer from imprisonment in Hell, and Ruby, an unusually civic-minded demon who offers to help the brothers fight Lillith and her army. Though the brothers—particularly Dean—are unwilling to accept aid from a demon given their history with supernatural creatures, Ruby helps them out of several sticky situations and the brothers grudgingly agree to include her in their scheme to overthrow Lillith. Unfortunately, Dean's year soon runs out, and not even Ruby can prevent hellhounds from dragging him into Hell. While Dean is absent from this earth, Sam continues hunting evil without him, and Ruby shows Sam how to kill Lillith: drinking demon blood makes him stronger. Though he knows Dean would have disapproved, the grieving and angry Sam justifies his behavior on the grounds that Dean is dead, and that he must kill Lillith so Dean's death won't have been in vain.

Miraculously, however, Dean comes back from Hell: he's been raised by an angel, Castiel, who tells him that his work on earth is not finished. Dean rejoins Sam, but the latter keeps his growing dependence on Ruby and her demon blood to himself to prevent a fight. Dean has a secret, too: time passes differently in Hell and, while he was only absent from earth for four months, his time in Hell was actually about forty years. Each day for the first thirty years, Dean was mercilessly tortured; during the final ten years, however, he agreed to torture other souls to escape from his own torment, and he became just as ruthless as those who had made him suffer. The brothers can't keep their secrets for long, however, especially after they learn that Dean's decision to torture souls in Hell broke the first of sixty-six seals needed to free Lucifer

from his fiery cage. With help from Castiel, Bobby, and Ruby, the brothers frantically try to prevent the seals from breaking. Sam's dependence on demon blood grows and grows, causing great conflict with Dean. The two ultimately split up, and Sam makes a huge mistake: he finally kills Lillith, only to find out that Ruby has betrayed him, for in killing Lillith, Sam breaks the final seal and releases Lucifer from Hell.

With Lucifer roaming the earth and a full-scale Apocalypse on hand, Sam and Dean assume that things can't get much worse...until they discover that the only way for the war between Heaven and Hell to end is a cosmic battle between Lucifer and the arch-angel Michael, who are destined to inhabit Sam's and Dean's bodies, respectively, when they fight this battle. The brothers spend most of Season 5 trying to escape their destinies, hunting the four horsemen of the Apocalypse in the meantime as part of a desperate plan to send Lucifer back to Hell. Castiel, who develops doubts as to why God hasn't yet stopped the battle and destroyed Lucifer, loses his angelic powers and, in the season finale (which is as far as I've watched, though a sixth season is currently on air) Sam consents to become Lucifer's vessel then leaps into the pit of Hell, hoping to trap him there.

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The interaction between Mélusine's character and her physical location that Brownlee emphasizes in this quotation helps confirm the interrelatedness between subject and setting which characterizes *Le Roman de Mélusine*.

The tradition of connecting supernatural characters and stories within liminal settings continues in late twentieth and early twenty-first century fantasy tales. For example, the small Washington town of Forks, the setting of the *Twilight* novels and films, is the perfect home for both vampires and werewolves: its persistently cold, damp weather enables the sunlight-sensitive vampires to come out during the day without attracting unwanted attention, and the nearby Quileute reservation provides an ideal setting for certain members of the tribe to pass on the genetic and cultural heritage that enables their descendants to become shape-shifters. Similarly, the Louisiana town of Bon Temps, the setting of the *True Blood* series, is steeped in history; its connections with Civil War battles and hoodoo witchcraft, among other things, contribute to its evolution into a center of vampiric and other supernatural activity. Melissa Ames highlights two additional examples of fantasy-story locales which connect with their supernatural characters: she describes the fictional town of Fell's Church, in which L. J. Smith's series *The Vampire Diaries* takes place, as a "center of paranormal activity" (47) and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s setting of Sunnydale as a "city prone to supernatural monstrosities" (49). Even in the *Supernatural* television series, which takes place not in one city but across all of the continental United States, brothers Sam and Dean Winchester frequently return to fight supernatural forces in Lawrence, Kansas, the city where they were born and where the yellow-eyed demon killed their mother, beginning their life-long quests to fight evil. Thus, liminal settings act as critical elements in both the medieval and the modern supernatural tales, reflecting the tension between ordinary and extraordinary which is woven throughout each of the stories.

Powers, Curses, and Creatures of the Supernatural World

Liminal settings lay the foundations for tales of the supernatural and initiate us into the alternate worlds in which these stories take place. In the supernatural worlds these tales create, we encounter a variety of characters and creatures with singular abilities and become subject to the systems of law that govern them. It is not our place to question these tropes but to accept them; for example, though few details are given concerning Presine's fairy nature—we are never told who her parents are, whence she came, or why she is singing at the fountain—we discern, almost immediately, that she is more than human. Because she is more than mortal, her melodious voice enchants Elinas so that he knows not "*s'il est jour ou nuit, ou s'il dort ou veille*" (D'Arras 58), and the richly-ornamented harness belonging to Presine's attendant further confirms her status as a fairy, for the fairies of medieval lays generally possess great wealth.

As a fairy, Presine lives under supernatural law, and her half-human daughters soon come under its influence as well. When Mélusine, Melior, and Palestine imprison Elinas in the enchanted mountain of Brumborenlion—which seems to be already enchanted when the girls hatch their plan, though they still must use their "*fæe condicion*", to imprison him inside it (D'Arras 68)—Presine is so infuriated that she curses them. She reveals that her daughters "would have been subject to supernatural law—that of nymphs and fairies—for only a short time, never to return to it" if they had not committed the wicked act of imprisoning Elinas in the mountain (D'Arras 71). This idea of supernatural law is an intriguing one for, though Presine claims that it was from Elinas that she "took all pleasures in the world of mortals," she blames her daughters' misdeed on the human nature they inherited from her beloved husband (D'Arras 71). This seems to imply that, though Presine still loves Elinas deeply, she acknowledges that he is partially to blame for what has happened; after all, he did break his promise to her, and he

passed his human weakness on to his daughters. It also seems to indicate that the law, rather than Presine's anger, is the reason behind the girls' curses, yet Presine uses the first person when naming the origin of their punishments: she says, "*Mais desormais je te donne le don*" (D'Arras 71, emphasis added). As in Marie de France's *Lanval*, fairies seem to be able, in some circumstances, to break the supernatural law which governs them: Lanval's beloved returns to him although he breaks the condition of their relationship, and Presine decides to eternally subject her daughters to the fairy laws although they should have eventually become exempt from them. Ironically, though Presine is powerful enough to bend supernatural law to punish her daughters, she is unable to break Elinas free from the mountain where their daughters have imprisoned him.

The curses by which Presine subjects her daughters to supernatural law are also critical among the fantastic elements in the story. Presine reprimands Mélusine because, as the eldest daughter, she "should have been the wisest" but instead encourages her sisters to join her in her wicked scheme against Elinas (D'Arras 71). Consequently, Presine punishes Mélusine first, cursing her to become a serpent from the waist down every Saturday, though allowing her to marry and give birth to a noble line and even giving her the chance to live a normal, mortal life (aside from her serpent tail) if her husband meets the conditions placed on their marriage. It seems significant that Presine places this curse on Mélusine—at whom she is most angry—since, of the three punishments she assigns her daughters, this one most resembles her own fate. Presine and Mélusine both love their human husbands dearly, though both husbands break the conditions placed on their marriages and, as a result, throw mother and daughter into the greatest despair. Presine and Mélusine also give birth to children who possess a mixture of human and supernatural qualities and who, both directly and indirectly, bring about their separation from

their husbands. Possibly Presine chooses this punishment for Mélusine because, having undergone similar trials herself, she knows just how bitter this fate may be, yet we could also argue that Mélusine's curse is less severe than those placed on her sisters: Melior must stand watch over a sparrow-hawk for the rest of her days, granting material gifts to worthy knights, while Palestine must remain locked inside a mountain, guarding her father's treasure, until a knight of her lineage arrives to free her. Thus the younger sisters escape the heartbreak Mélusine suffers, but in exchange must live lonely lives; if the old adage "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all" holds any truth, then Melior and Palestine actually suffer worse punishments than their older sister endures.

Among the myriad characteristics that mark Mélusine as a supernatural character is her gift of prophecy; she has intimate knowledge of both past and future events which no other character in the tale possesses. For instance, when Raymondin excuses himself for being too preoccupied to notice Mélusine and her attendants on the grounds that he is tired from his long ride, she chides him for not telling her the truth, revealing that she already knows all about him. She calls Raymondin by name—though he has not introduced himself—and says, "*Je sçay bien comment il vous va*" (D'Arras 94). Mélusine goes on to reveal her power, as well as her knowledge, saying

In Heaven's name, Raymondin, I am second only to God in being able to advance your interests in this world of mortals; indeed 'tis I who can help you out of your adversity and transform your evil deed into good. What's the use of pretending? I know very well that you killed your lord in error. For although it might look as though you had meant to do it, at that moment you had not dreamed of doing such

Interview with Goatman Author J. Nathan Couch

cultofweird.com

Flesh or Folklore: Interview with Goatman Author J. Nathan Couch

By Charlie Hintz on November 30, 2015

Goatman researcher J. Nathan Couch talks about the strange legends and chilling encounters with the strangest creature roaming the backwoods of America.



Goatman author J. Nathan Couch

Goatman: Flesh or Folklore? author J. Nathan Couch. Photo by John Ehlke.

A few years ago when Cult of Weird contributor J. Nathan Couch announced the subject of his second book was going to be the bizarre and elusive Goatman, I had no idea how many states across the US had a campfire legend about the menacing creature. It was not a story limited solely to the weird back roads of Wisconsin.

According to a frenzy of recent sightings in three states, it seems there could even be a goatman lurking in the woods near you. But what, exactly, is this reclusive cryptid with an insatiable murderous appetite for young lovers and wayward travelers?

Well, it's stranger than any of the other beasts roaming the forests of North America, and according to Couch, *this legend has actually killed some people.*

Cult of Weird: What prompted you to begin researching goatman legends?

J. Nathan Couch: I was initially attracted to it because of just how strange it is. Even compared to subjects like Bigfoot sightings, ghostly manifestations, and alien abductions, it's exceedingly bizarre. The idea of something resembling a mythological Greek satyr running around the outskirts of Midwestern American civilization is mind boggling. What really prompted me to research the subject in great detail was when I interviewed a gentleman from West Bend, Wisconsin, named Jason Miller. Several years back, Miller was bow hunting for Deer in early autumn, when he saw, heard, even smelled a creature he described as Goatman near the little town of Kewaskum, Wisconsin.

The idea that even one human being had encountered such an entity made me immediately want to know everything there was to know on the subject. I quickly realized that similar legends and sightings were occurring all over the country, and had been since the 1800s. Since *Goatman: Flesh or Folklore?* has been published, even more legends and sightings have been brought to my attention.

Where are some of the significant legends around the US?

The three locations around the United States with the most famous Goatman legends or sightings is Bowie, Maryland just outside of Washington, D.C., Louisville, Kentucky, and Fort Worth, Texas. All are unique and infamous for various reasons.

Bowie's legend is the first one that drew national attention. Various stories about the creature skulking around houses and murdering household pets made newspapers all over America. It is also the version of the creature which is most often featured in pop culture. The Goatman of Bowie has been in films, comic books, and television shows.

Louisville's monster is unique in that it supposedly uses supernatural powers to lure people to their deaths. It supposedly coaxes people out onto a deadly railroad trestle, causing them to be killed by trains. While the creature's existence hasn't been proven, several people have met their doom by venturing onto the enormous, deadly structure.



Trestle where the Pope Lick monster lives

The Pope Lick train trestle in Louisville, Kentucky, home of the Pope Lick monster.

Fort Worth's Goatman is unique in that literally dozens of people—at the same time—witnessed this creature as it tossed a car wheel some 500 feet down a ridge near Lake Worth. The screams of the creature even sent Fort Worth police cowering to their squad cars.

Of course, legends exist in many other states including Wisconsin, California, Michigan and

several others. Many sightings even occur where there is no established history of a Goatman legend.

Cult of Weird headquarters is uniquely positioned between two prominent Wisconsin goatman legends. Tell me about those.

The first Wisconsin legend involves Hogsback Road, a treacherous road located near Holy Hill Basilica in Hubertus, Wisconsin. They say the creature debuted there in the 1870s by murdering a Civil War veteran who'd ventured off into the night looking for help when his wagon wheel splintered. The story is very folkloric, and probably not true, but sightings of the creature have been reported by very credible witnesses in recent years. Allegedly, the creature runs out in front of your car trying to run motorists off the road for an easy kill. Interestingly enough, most witnesses in this area do see the creature as it dashes into the path of their vehicle.

The second legend exists in Kewaskum, Wisconsin. Supposedly an abusive old drunk murdered his wife, but was ultimately killed by one of his goats as he continued his rampage.

They say he returned as a goatlike apparition, and haunts the woods where he lived. This is the area where Jason Miller claims to have witnessed a goatlike biped.



Goatman road in Kewaskum, Wisconsin

S Mill Rd, also known as Goatman Road, in Keswaskum, Wisconsin.

When you conduct the Downtown West Bend [Wisconsin] Ghost Walks, people will often share their own experiences with you afterward. Has Goatman ever come up?

Once last year an older couple approached me after the rest of the tour patrons had left, and told me of a sighting that occurred at their home in Southern

Kewaskum. The man was up early in the morning, rummaging around in his kitchen. He heard gunshots outside. He lived in a heavily wooded area and assumed it was his neighbors shooting at coyotes. He looked out his window expecting to see a pack of the animals running along the snow mobile trail in his backyard, but saw something completely unexpected. He saw a creature running extremely fast, and extremely well in very deep snow. It was bipedal, covered in shaggy grey-brown fur, and strangest of all, it's head was shaped like a horse! It jumped a very high snowdrift and fled into the woods.

In your research, have you found any evidence that seems to support the stories?

I haven't done a lot of field research. I'm more of a reclusive introvert sort of writer. But I do plan to change that soon. As soon as hunting season ends I'd like to get out in the Kettle Moraine Forest here in Wisconsin, and try and find physical evidence. A local investigation group by the name of WPI Hunts the Truth was recently sent a photograph of an enormous hoof print the size of a grown man's hand, from Oak Creek near Milwaukee. Perhaps it's the distorted print of a large deer, but it could be something else. The jury is still out.

Goatman hoof print? Photo courtesy of WPI

Hunts the Truth.

What do you believe is the likely origin of Goatman lore?



Goatman hoof print found in Wisconsin

The legends of Goatman probably originated from sightings of a depression era vagabond named Charles "Goatman" McCarthy. He was an eccentric, bearded Christian preacher that roamed America for decades, pulled along in a rickety wagon by a team of Goats. In several cases, I've found that McCarthy visited various locations where Goatman monster legends would eventually exist. He was a celebrity during his day, with his travels regularly covered by the Associated Press. His travels attracted large groups of curiosity seekers. Stories of McCarthy could have

mutated over the decades. As for what sort of creature eyewitnesses are allegedly seeing, given the creatures' tendencies to display seemingly supernatural abilities, and their uncanny knack for avoiding human beings when they apparently live on the outskirts of suburbia, I'd say they have to be some sort of paranormal entity rather than flesh and blood.



Goatman book by J. Nathan Couch

Goatman: Flesh or Folklore? is available on Amazon and in the Cult of Weird shop.

Follow J. Nathan Couch on his website at www.jnathancouch.com

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(Reuters) - A suspected burglar who attempted to enter a California home through the chimney died on Saturday after the homeowner lit a fire without realizing anyone was inside, police said.

The man appeared to have climbed into the chimney during the night while the owner was away and then became stuck, according to the Fresno County Sheriff's Office.

After the owner of the home in Huron lit a fire in his fireplace Saturday afternoon, he heard a man yelling inside the chimney as the house filled with smoke, the sheriff's office said in a statement.

The homeowner tried to extinguish the flames, but firefighters who dismantled the chimney during a rescue effort found the suspect dead inside, the sheriff's office said.

The deceased man's identity and cause of death have not been determined, Lieutenant Brandon Pursell of the Fresno County Sheriff's Office said by phone on Sunday.

(Reporting by Colleen Jenkins; Editing by Chris Reese)

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Northern Ireland psychic wins appeal over fraud conviction

Wed, Dec 9, 2015

irishtimes.com

Patrick Doak says character and career 'destroyed' by charges involving less than £100

Alan Erwin in Belfast

One of Northern Ireland's best known psychics has won an appeal against being found guilty of fraud offences at a care home. Judges declared Patrick Doak's convictions for false accounting unsafe after hearing new evidence.

One of Northern Ireland's best known psychics has won an appeal against being found guilty of fraud offences at a care home.

Judges declared Patrick Doak's convictions for false accounting unsafe after hearing new evidence from a former colleague who countersigned money sheets at the former Owenvale Court residential home in Belfast.

The spiritualist (52), who has always protested his innocence, said outside court: "I have had my character and my career destroyed."

The charges, involving less than £100 in total, dated back to September 2006 when he managed facilities run at the time by St John of God.

Money was regularly entrusted to senior staff on behalf of residents at the home on the Springfield Road.

Five counts

Mr Doak had been found guilty last year on five counts of false accounting. He received a one-month jail sentence, suspended for two years.

But his lawyers went to the Court of Appeal in an attempt to overturn the convictions, arguing that he was wrongly found to have acted dishonestly in dealing with new balance sheets created to correct staff errors.

A residential worker who co-signed the sheets but never testified at the trial gave evidence on his behalf. The prosecution accepted her account raised issues which could potentially have gone before the jury.

Allowing the appeal, the judges held that the co-signatory operated to ensure the "integrity" of the ledger as well as confirming the amounts.

Lord Chief Justice Sir Declan Morgan, sitting with Lord Justice Weatherup and Mr Justice Colton, confirmed the new evidence could have been relevant to the case made by Mr Doak.

"For that reason we consider the convictions in relation to the five counts are unsafe," he said.

Although the prosecution could still seek a retrial, the Chief Justice noted the passage of time. "One might wonder whether there's a great deal to be served by it."

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Is this person wearing pants?

17:03 PM

news.com.au

'Half-naked' woman or man snapped checking into swanky hotel causes online meltdown

December 9, 2015 2:38pm



Michael Morrow

THIS photo of a woman, or man, checking into a luxury hotel has Facebook in a spin over her, or his, choice or lack of clothing.

At first look it seems the person in question has decided to head to reception with no pants but after being uploaded online there have been a number of theories.

Online debate ... Thousands have taken to social media to try and work out what's going on here. Picture: Facebook/Passenger Shaming

"Guys! That is a woman wearing very unflattering beige leggings," one social media user said.

"Good evening S..... Oh! So here's the thing ... As I stepped off the Airport Shuttle a presence just blew my pants away! Do you offer naturist rates?.." another commented.

Many believe the person is a man saying they could see thick leg hair in the image.

The photograph was uploaded to the Passenger Shaming page and has racked up thousands of views and comments.

What do you think is going on in this photo?

Source: Facebook

News Limited Copyright © . All times on this site are AEDT (GMT +11).



Confusion ... Is this a man or lady? Pants on or pants off?
Picture: Facebook/Passenger Shaming

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Japan: Talent contests for funerary professionals - BBC News

bbc.com

By News from Elsewhere... ..as found by BBC Monitoring

• 11 December 2015



Sayuri Takahashi took home a trophy after demonstrating her "nokan" skills on a live - though very still - model

A three-day exhibition entirely devoted to showcasing funerary services has been held in Japan.

The inaugural Life Ending Industry Expo welcomed more than 7,000 visitors per day to its venue in Tokyo, according to organisers. Among its more unusual events was a competition for professionals in "nokan", or the ritual of preparing a body for burial or cremation, who

demonstrated their methods on a live model, the Asahi Shimbun website reports. Contestants were partly judged on how gracefully the process was carried out, and the winner was awarded a trophy and cash prize.

Another contest saw Buddhist monks and priests show off their skills in an effort to encourage people back to traditional funerals, with one participant karate-chopping a pile of tiles with his bare hand.

As well as professional demonstrations, the huge space also hosted displays from more than 200 businesses offering everything from luxury hearses to novelty urns, the NHK news website says. There was also information on non-traditional services, including an exhibit touting "space burials", in which a person's ashes are launched into space on a rocket.

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Image copyright AFP

Japanese Department Store May Want to Look Up the Word 'Fucking'

gawker.com



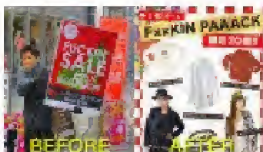
Japanese Department Store May Want to Look Up the Word 'Fucking'

If only we could have sat in on the meeting where the marketing team for this Osaka department store came up with the idea for their "Fuckin' Sale," spotted early this month by a reader of Jake Adelstein's Japan Subculture blog.

- There should be some cool English words on these signs.
- How about "Fuckin' Sale?"
- What's that mean?

-Fuckin' means, like, really good. So it's a really good sale.
-And there's no other meaning to "fuckin'? Nothing at all that might embarrass us on the internet? Remember what happened with our Save-a-Shit-Ton promotion...

Update: The fuckin sale has been cleaned up



• All replies

The following replies are approved. To see additional replies that are pending approval, click Show Pending. Warning: These may contain graphic material.

Show pending

Warning: Replies that are pending approval may contain graphic material. Please proceed with caution.

Hide pending



• MizJenkins
1/09/12 10:54am

...aaaaaaand cue the "Fa ra ra ra" jokes. There, I did it for you. Let's see what else you fools have now that the obvious racist joke is off the table.

I double dog dare you not to say anything about Japanese school girls or vending machine panties.

25

Reply

Flagged



• AliHajiSheik
1/09/12 10:57am

The fa ra ra ra ra guys were chinese. What do you think they all look alike?

276
Reply
Flagged



• sixthreeone
1/09/12 10:59am

But tentacle penis hands are still fair game, right?

27
Reply
Flagged



• SchenkersAxe
1/09/12 10:59am

I know, right? A store puts up a huge sign with the word "fuckin'" in it, and Gawker points it out? How racist!

At least we know the cashiers will get the 20% calculations correct.

60
Reply
Flagged



• MizJenkins
1/09/12 11:04am

If you had tentacle penis hands I think you would have a distinct advantage at the 20% off fuckin' sale.

34
Reply
Flagged

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• lobstr
1/09/12 11:43am

My favoritetestest one ever. Right during the Beijing Olympics. The 404 with broccoli is awesome.

94
Reply
Flagged

• Shouldnthave



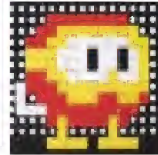
1/09/12 12:05pm

How is that possible? Epic, is the only adjective that comes to mind.

4

Reply

Flagged



lobstr

1/09/12 5:36pm

The theory is that they must have typed in the name of a

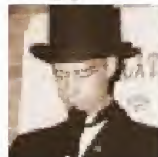
restaurant that's too obscure for the translation software to yield a proper English translation, so it errored out in English, leading them to think that "Translate Server Error" must be how you see their restaurant in English!

But then to print this big-ass banner with it on there and hang it in a train station where they were anticipating an influx of Olympics visitors makes it that much more funny :[]

13

Reply

Flagged



LighticeShouldnthave

11/25/15 7:55pm

Not like the Chinese are alone with these kinds of errors:

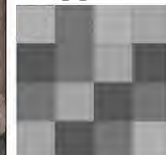


The Welsh part of that sign reads "I am not in the office at the moment. Send any work to be translated."

55

Reply

Flagged



Did_it_for_the_Alliance

lobstr

That simplified Chinese literally translates to "restaurant" or "cafeteria". Must be using North Korean translation software.

2

Reply

Flagged

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raincoaster
1/09/12 12:49pm

This is FUCKING awesome!

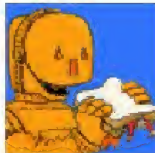
PS I knew a woman whose job it was to register kids for the school system. In Vancouver, we get a lot of immigrant children, and their parents always try to pick them a good, simple, Canadian sounding name so they fit in. Do they go for Lee-Ann? For Al? They do not. My Chinese friend Roger will never forgive his parents for giving him a name they themselves cannot pronounce.

One day this woman had to dissuade a pair of parents from naming their child a word they saw on sweatshirts all over the place: B.U.M.

19

Reply

Flagged



TheCuriosity
1/09/12 1:28pm

I'm sure as far as Roger's parents are concerned, they can pronounce his name just fine.

2

Reply

Flagged



raincoaster
1/09/12 1:48pm

NO, they know damn well they can't. They said they gave him that name so he'd sound more Canadian than they ever would. They knew they'd never say it right.

7

Reply

Flagged



SugarflyMcQueen
1/09/12 2:15pm

Lee-Ann sounds like if someone immigrated from China to Canada via Alabama.

33

Reply
Flagged

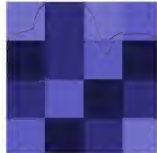


• raincoaster
1/09/12 3:31pm

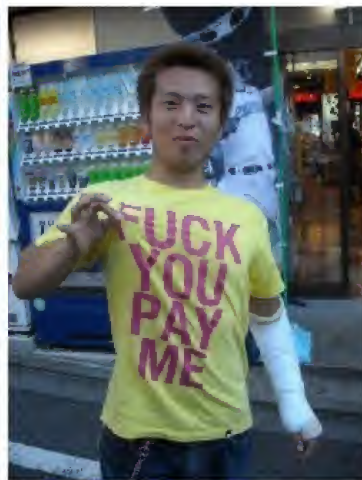
No, there were three Lee-Anns in my class one year. We have inbred enclaves in Canuckistan too.

9
Reply
Flagged

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• Charlotte Corday
1/09/12 11:17am



This is not really a new phenomenon. See English for loads more examples.

46
Reply
Flagged



• Zuzax
1/09/12 11:23am

I am so buying that shirt.

35
Reply
Flagged

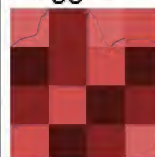


• Syphilitic Scalia Says
1/09/12 11:26am



What's the problem?

42
Reply
Flagged



• Bruce Dickenson
1/09/12 11:32am

From the look of his arm, I don't think he won this argument.

33
Reply
Flagged

• kappakappaspankme



1/09/12 11:44am

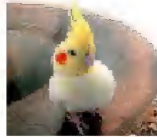
Thank you for that!

1

Reply

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hilikusopus

1/09/12 11:23am



We've covered this already.
[kotaku.com]



**When All Else
Fails, Write in
Fucking
English When**

**All Else Fails, Write in Fucking
English When All Else Fails,
Write in Fucking English**

My native language is English.
Yours might be. It might be another

language, I don't know.... Read more Read more

1

Reply

Flagged



MsxH

1/09/12 11:36am

Hmm, this is interesting. I've frequently wondered about the cumulative effects of advertising overkill; In other words, when we are inundated with advertising and slogans at every turn, we begin to overcompensate by narrowing our focus. Information becomes, as the link says, "white noise." If I can help it, I don't read advertising at all, even the words that go on peoples' clothing. It just gets to be too much. The downside is that advertising drowns out the real information that citizens need to function: subway signs, traffic signs, public health information, et cetera. I wonder if scientists have researched the effect that advertising overkill has had on the public.

2

Reply

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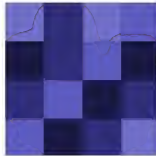
hilikusopus

1/09/12 11:53am



I try to tune out advertising jingoism as much as possible. If I feel like I'm being oversaturated with it, I definitely tune out, and the "message" backfires. I worry less about an inability to access critical information, and more about the increasing scarcity of silent contemplation. How can we see the forest for the trees, if every tree is covered top-to-bottom in ads?

Reply
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• ChrisMackinMsxH
11/26/15 4:46am

As a marketing analytics director, I can tell you how much advertising overkill has had an effect: "not much". Here's basically what we see with most of our campaigns, and we *can* measure it fairly accurately, especially online:

1. Everyone loves to tell themselves and everyone who will listen that "*I* don't read advertising and it's all white noise and has no effect on *me*".
2. Advertiser runs big online ad campaign with banner visuals and messaging targeted to the types of people the advertiser wants to attract. Ads drop cookies that signal to the advertiser who has seen their messages.
3. Advertiser runs an *identical* campaign at the same time with ads in all the same places, but only shows ads for a charity with no mention of themselves.
4. Groups from 2 and 3 are **not allowed to see each others' ads**.
5. Advertiser measures how many people who **saw** their ads end up buying something on their site in the next 30 days. They also measure how many of the people who **didn't see** their ad but instead only saw the charity ad ended up later buying something on their site *anyway*.
6. The group that saw the ads and says "**Oh I don't ever notice ads**" almost always ends up buying far more of the advertiser's products than the group that didn't see the ads. This happens the majority of the time, unless the ads themselves were *really* bad or targeted to the wrong people.

Moral of the story: no one can reliably just say they're unaffected by ads because the effect happens without you noticing it.

3
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Jesus Christ! These Are The Craziest Nativity Scenes We've Ever Seen

huffingtonpost.com

Christian author Mark Oestreicher collects the weirdest, wackiest and most wonderful Nativity scenes.

- David Moye

12/11/2015 01:36 pm ET

Faith inspires people to do great things -- and some gloriously strange things as well.

- **Zombie Nativity**



Courtesy of Etsy.com/Fetishforethics

The birth of Jesus has inspired many artists and entrepreneurs to put their own spin on the tale. Christian author Mark Oestreicher has collected some of his favorites on his blog, WhylsMarko.com, including this one that depicts all participants as zombies in "Deathlehem."

- **Rubber Duckie Nativity**

Courtesy of WhylsMarko.com

Oestreicher used to be bothered when he would see Nativity scenes depicting Jesus, Mary and Joseph as rubber ducks, but now he looks at products like these as "whimsical attempts for people to engage in a mystery."

- **Meat Nativity**

flickr: [Greg Chow](http://GregChow)

This depiction of the birth of Jesus "meats" all of Oestreicher's criteria for an offbeat Nativity -- and has the added bonus of being able to feed peoples' stomachs and their souls at the same time.



- **Nativity Cupcake Toppers**

Courtesy of Eetsy.com/Frostedinsanity

At first, Oestreicher was taken aback by the use of obviously commercial products, such as these cupcake toppers, even though they "weren't morally wrong." But he has learned to enjoy them.

- **Mermaid Nativity**



Flickr: Teyacapan

Oestreicher loves the craft that went behind this Nativity scene, even though he finds the concept fishy.

- Spam Nativity

Courtesy of WhyIsMarko.com

This depiction of the Bethlehem manger in spam is surely made for Monty Python fans.

- Courtesy of WhyIsMarko.com

Oestreicher is particularly amused by this snow globe Nativity, mainly because of the way Mary and Joseph are looking at their child through a fishbowl.

- S'mores Nativity

Courtesy of WhyIsMarko.com

Oestreicher believes this Nativity, which depicts Jesus and family as s'mores, is perhaps the worst Nativity set he's seen.

- Shotgun Shell Nativity

Etsy.com/mammasfavorite

If there is a person in your life whose favorite religious ditty is "Praise The Lord And Pass The Ammunition," this Nativity made from shotgun shells is sure to hit the bullseye.

- Soap Nativity

Etsy.com/RobinMoore1966

Oestreicher's annual blog post of weird Nativity scenes has become so big that some people send him photos of their work in hopes of inclusion, such as this soap Nativity.

- Tampon Nativity

TamponCrafts.com

Oestreicher initially worried about

including this Nativity scene that uses tampons, but decided to go ahead since it comes from a legitimate craft website that just happens to be dedicated to using tampons.

- Moose Nativity

ChristmasInPrescott.com

Oestreicher admits that he's not a fan of animal Nativity scenes, because they lack creativity.

- Meerkat Nativity





- Halloween Nativity

Bimey.com

Because some Christians are anti-Halloween, Oestreicher wasn't sure about the intent of the people who made this Nativity scene, but after discussions with the creators, decided it was not malicious, just fun.

- Frog Nativity

- Color Nativity

BuySebastianBergne.com

This Nativity scene, using only color blocks, is Oestreicher's current favorite, as it shows that the Nativity is so iconic that it's possible to look at these abstract shapes and still tell what it's depicting immediately.

- JazzyGourmet.com

Oestreicher jokes that the religious act of eating the body of Christ takes on new dimensions when he's made of chocolate.

- Fondant Nativity

Etsy.com

There's only one word for these yummy-looking Nativity characters made from frosting: Delicious!

- Gingerbread Yard Art Nativity

Ebay.com

Celebrate two important holiday signifiers -- the Nativity and gingerbread men -- by combining them into big lawn ornaments.

- Monkey Nativity

Etsy.com

This depiction of the Nativity featuring monkeys may cause a lot of



discussion over the theory of evolution.

- Nativity Puzzle Erasers

Word.com.au

A Nativity-themed puzzle eraser set may seem bizarre, but Oestreicher points out that Christians believe Jesus came to Earth to erase people's sins.

- Nesting Dolls Nativity

Oriental Trading Company



Nativity nesting dolls are fairly common, but Oestreicher likes this particular set because the tiny sheep fits inside Baby Jesus.

- Father Santa Nativity

Courtesy of Mark Oestreicher

Santa is a popular fixture in many Nativities, but Oestreicher said this one of Kris Kringle holding Baby Jesus moments after his birth takes things to a different level altogether.

- Nativity Inside Frog Stomach

Frogstore.com

Oestreicher says this frog belly Nativity is "one of the strangest and most disorienting Nativities on the whole list."

- Frankenstein Nativity

Facebook

Christmas is great, Frankenstein movies are great, but that doesn't mean Frankenstein should be made into a Nativity scene.

- Minimalist Nativity

emilievoirin.com

There is something to be said for simplicity, even with Nativity scenes as this minimalist set of blocks with descriptive names demonstrates.

- Radish Nativity

Christy Hemphill

People all over the world make Nativities out of what they have handy. In Oaxaca City, Mexico, locals carve Nativities out of radishes because Dec. 23 is celebrated as "Radish Night."



Although Oestreicher believes all the nutty Nativities show the power of the Christmas story, not everyone has the same belief.

Case in point: Sycamore Township, Ohio, where citizens are in an uproar over a man's zombie-themed Christmas display that includes an undead baby Jesus.

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When labs clash over tardigrade DNA, that's just science working as it should

By Rachel Feltman
December 7

washingtonpost.com



Water bear don't care. (AP Photo/Bob Goldstein & Vicki Madden, UNC Chapel Hill)

Tardigrades — otherwise known as water bears or (gasp) moss piglets — are weird. They can survive in the vacuum of space, for starters. So when researchers at the University of North Carolina announced on Nov. 23 that the minuscule animal had hitherto unheard of ratios of DNA borrowed from plants, fungi and bacteria, many in the scientific community were more than happy to believe the strange findings. Now, a lab at the University of Edinburgh claims the results must be an error.

This might seem like a throwdown, but it's far from any kind of bitter rivalry: We're watching science work the way it's supposed to. The only difference is that we, the general public, actually get to see it happen — and at digital speeds.

When University of Edinburgh's Mark Blaxter first read the recent study, he says he instantly suspected something was amiss. The work, led by UNC's Bob Goldstein, concluded that the tardigrade's DNA is one-sixth foreign, doubling the previous record for outside DNA contributions. That would mean that it had swapped so many genes with other organisms (through a process called horizontal gene transfer) that it had evolved into a strange mosaic (or frankenstein) of an animal. Most animals have genomes that are over 99 percent homegrown, so the tardigrade's massive ream of borrowed genes could theoretically account for its apparent invincibility.



(National Geographic via Giphy)

"Bob Goldstein is a brilliant, brilliant scientist," Blaxter told The Post. "I use his studies in teaching undergrads all the time, as examples to my students — this is how science is done. So this study coming from his lab, when people already know tardigrades are a little bit weird — to see this was like cherries on the cake."

"The story, if it were true, is

exactly as exciting as they say — but I don't think it's true," Blaxter said.

Blaxter's lab is no stranger to the tardigrade genome. In fact, they work from the same species culture that UNC does. The labs had shared data frequently, and this new twist came as a complete surprise to Blaxter and his colleagues.

[This sea slug steals plant genes to live like a leaf]

"We just hadn't seen evidence of that at all," Blaxter said. The fact that tardigrades have genes they've acquired through horizontal gene transfer isn't up for dispute. But the record-breaking volume didn't line up with his own lab's work.

He suspected that the genome had been contaminated with random bacteria from the lab, despite rigorous efforts to avoid exactly that.

"With little things like tardigrades, we can't scrub each and every one of its bacteria, and just like us they come with bacteria on their skin and in their guts," he explained. "It's very hard to get rid of that. Even if you starve the bacteria, they'll hang out hoping the good days return.

[Without genes pilfered from bacteria, ticks would drop dead of the Lyme disease they carry]

So he did what any suspicious scientist would do: He asked for the data. Once UNC made it public, Blaxter's lab set out to compare the genome analysis used in the new study with the genome they'd sequenced from their own, presumably identical tardigrade cells. In theory, the genes found in the tardigrade at UNC — including the high volume of bacterial genes — should have shown up in Edinburgh, too.

But they didn't.

"The simplest answer is that, well, all these genes appearing only in the UNC genome are bacteria-like, so they're probably bacteria," Blaxter said. "And the simplest answer is usually the right one."

That doesn't mean the jury is out. The initial paper passed peer review — meaning that other scientists signed off on it before it could be published — but the response from Edinburgh was put online before going through this process. Just because it's a correction doesn't mean it's correct.

[Why science is so hard to believe]

The University of Iowa's John Logsdon, who commented favorably on the first paper to The Atlantic, pointed this out when he spoke to The Post.

"I think both groups have been very earnest about their analyses and trying to get a right answer, but it seems to me like neither is entirely right," Logsdon said.

It isn't at all unusual for labs to check each other's work. In fact, that's kind of the point: A single study is never really "proof" of anything. Doing good science means different scientists

in different labs getting the same results over and over again.

[What water on Mars can teach us about scientific 'breakthroughs']

On the one hand, the quick appearance of this tardigrade gut check is great, because it shows how quickly science can correct itself in the digital age. Blaxter believes that a few decades ago these two studies would have sat in the literature unnoticed, with no one knowing or caring that one had "corrected" the other. But Logsdon points out that the speed of the Edinburgh response might make it seem like it's the final word on the subject – which might not be the case.

"This was a unique situation in which that second answer was sort of presumed to be correct without a lot of consideration," Logsdon said. "The response was sort of, oh, this was more what we expected anyway, so it must be right. It had a more conservative answer, so it struck a chord as, oh, the first one must have been overreaching."

What it probably comes down to, Logsdon said, is that one lab wasn't clean enough — but that the other was too clean, in a manner of speaking. It's possible that Edinburgh was too conservative in removing bacterial genes from its tardigrade sample where UNC was too liberal in counting them. While one group is likely closer to the truth than the other, Logsdon said, it would be a mistake to consider the second lab's work a definitive takedown of the first study.

Julie C. Hotopp, a University of Maryland School of Medicine professor who works on horizontal gene transfer, was much more critical of the UNC work in a blog post she wrote on the subject. But Hotopp also pointed out that the truth was likely somewhere between the two datasets.

The authors of the original paper, who declined a request for comment, are keeping quiet while they work on their data. The Edinburgh researchers are continuing to work on their own genome in the hopes of solidifying their findings. But no matter the outcome, one thing is clear: This is all part of how science is supposed to work. Science isn't a bunch of facts -- — it's a process of finding better and better answers to questions posed by the natural world.

And sometimes that means figuring out whose lab is just clean enough to unlock the secrets of the noble moss piglet.

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ustine est dicit



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When the French explorer Lapérouse went missing, a search voyage was put together to retrace his course around the islands of Australasia. On the mission was the naturalist Jacques Labillardière who published a book in 1800 of his experiences. Edward Duyker, author of *Citizen Labillardière: A Naturalist's Life in Revolution and Exploration (1755-1834)*, explores the impact of his pioneering work.



Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardière's **Relation du voyage à la recherche de La Pérouse** (1800) is a personal account of an attempt to solve a mystery which began in March 1788. After a five week sojourn—following up on James Cook's discoveries, investigating reports of a new British colony and undertaking scientific work – the French explorer Jean-François Galaup de Lapérouse sailed out of Botany Bay, New South Wales, and was never seen again by Europeans.

His disappearance was a matter of great national concern in France. Just before mounting the scaffold of the guillotine, Louis XVI is said to have asked: 'Is there any news of M. de Lapérouse?'. In 1791, when the French National Assembly decided to send a rescue expedition, probably the first humanitarian mission on a global scale in world history, Admiral Antoine Raymond Joseph Bruny d'Entrecasteaux was chosen as the commander of its two ships: Recherche and Esperance ('Search' and 'Hope').

We know now that Lapérouse's expedition was wrecked off Vanikoro in the Solomon Islands. Although d'Entrecasteaux sailed very close to Vanikoro, he failed to discover the fate of Lapérouse and ultimately perished during the voyage. Nevertheless, his expedition made a number of significant geographical discoveries. In Tasmania these discoveries included Recherche Bay, the D'Entrecasteaux Channel (between the mainland and Bruny Island) and the estuaries of the Huon and Derwent Rivers. In Western Australia, d'Entrecasteaux discovered Esperance Bay and surveyed the Archipelago of the Recherche. He also discovered islands in the d'Entrecasteaux group off New Guinea and named and surveyed the Huon Peninsula. Furthermore, his expedition was of considerable significance in the history of geophysics, for it returned with the first survey of global magnetic intensity, proving that it strengthens away from the equator to both north and south.

D'Entrecasteaux's voyage also yielded significant natural history collections and ethnographic observations – including some of the earliest recorded observations of the Aboriginal people of Tasmania. The most valuable contributions in these areas was made by the naturalist Labillardière. His *Relation du voyage à la recherche de La Pérouse* – one of the classic works of French travel literature – published by the printer and bookseller H.-J. Jansen in the rue



des Maçons, was accompanied by an atlas of impressive engravings based on sketches of scenes by Jean Piron, but also of plants by the great Pierre-Joseph Redouté and of birds by Jean-Baptiste Audebert. Labillardière's *Relation* proved to be an international best seller. There were several French editions and in 1817 the Atlas was reprinted. Four English editions quickly appeared between 1800 and 1802, and German editions were published in Hamburg (1801) and Vienna (1804). Through his authorship of the

Relation du voyage à la recherche de La Pérouse, Labillardière helped to usher the southern continent into the European imagination and may even have helped precipitate British pre-emptive settlement of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

Labillardière would also produce what in practical terms was the first published flora of Australia: the magnificent two-volume *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen* (1804–06) containing 265 copperplate engravings. Labillardière has the distinction of having named the floral emblems of Tasmania (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and Victoria (*Epacris impressa*), as well as the genus *Anigozanthus* to which the floral emblem of Western Australia belongs. Later he published the first flora of New Caledonia, *Sertum austro-caledonicum* (1824–1825), which unlike his earlier works was not organized on Linnean lines.



Born in Alençon, Normandy, in 1755, Labillardière was the son of a lace merchant. After studies at Alençon's Collège Royale, he studied botany and medicine at Montpellier under Antoine Gouan (a correspondent of Linnaeus), Reims and then in Paris where he came under the influence of Louis-Guillaume Le Monnier, Professor of Botany at the Jardin du Roi. He visited England in 1783 and met Sir Joseph Banks. On his return to France,

Labillardière travelled in the Alps with Dominique Villars and later Carlo Antonio Bellardi. In 1787–8, with the assistance of Le Monnier and Foreign Minister Vergennes, he collected in Cyprus, Lebanon and Syria—travels which provided the foundations for his important early work on the botany of the Near East: *Icones plantarum Syriae rariorum* (1791–1812). He was selected to join d'Entrecasteaux's expedition in 1791. Labillardière was a supporter of the French Revolution and was known for his difficult temperament. After the disintegration of the d'Entrecasteaux expedition, on royalist and republican lines in the Dutch East Indies, he suffered the indignity of internment and having his natural history specimens confiscated. Fortunately for posterity, these

I.		
Iron	-	Oukaméa
Island	-	Cau

K.		
Knock down (to)	-	Lavé
Knife (a)	-	Hailé

L.		
Lie down (to)	-	Fanao
Love (to)	-	Mamana

d 2

precious collections were returned through the gracious intervention of Sir Joseph Banks.

Although the *Relation* hints at sympathy for the 'transmutationist' ideas of Lamarck, Labillardière did not develop any evolutionary notions based on his field research.



Dance of the Friendly Islands, in presence of the French Fleet



Nevertheless, his books and articles had considerable taxonomic, systematic, biogeographic and morphological significance, and it was upon such foundations that later evolutionary ecology was built. In an age when the discovery of new species and genera was often seen as the apogee of botanical pursuit, Labillardière was accorded ample kudos. Even today, some fifty of the plant genera he established

survive. However, in his *Relation* and in a number of scientific papers, Labillardière ventured beyond a mere cataloguing of nature. He had a strong interest in applied botany and his writings contain numerous observations on subjects such as timber, plant fibres, food crops and herbal pharmacology. They also include studies of significant aspects of animal behaviour and physiology. And aside from his commercial-military strategic

perceptions — such as the advantages offered by the D'Entrecasteaux Channel for a trading maritime power, or the value of cultivating New Zealand flax for naval cordage — Labillardière's applied observations often had enduring ethnological significance. Furthermore, as an ethnographer he attempted to apply empirical methods to record the customs and social structures of indigenous communities he encountered in Australia and the Pacific. Arguably his vocabularies of native languages, as keys to cultural understanding, also beg comparison with his systematic botanical descriptions, representing as they do a

necessary ordering of the natural world on the threshold of modern ecological and evolutionary understanding.

In the wake of Napoleon's victories in Italy, Labillardière was appointed a special commissioner by the French government and to his discredit was involved in the plunder of Italian museums and libraries for France. In 1799 he married Marthe Goudes Desfriches, the twice-widowed daughter of a military surgeon, but they had no surviving children. He was elected a member of the Institut de France in 1800. Labillardière died in Paris on 9 January 1834 and is buried in Père Lachaise Cemetery. The English botanist Sir James Edward Smith named the genus *Billardiera* in his honour.

[miniflickr photoset_id="72157627313417525"]

Edward Duyker is the author of Citizen Labillardière: A Naturalist's Life in Revolution and Exploration (1755-1834), Miegunyah/Melbourne University Publishing, Melbourne, 2003. This biography won the New South Wales Premier's General History Prize in 2004. He is Adjunct Professor of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Australian Catholic University, and Honorary Senior Lecturer in the Department of French Studies, University of Sydney. In 2007 he was elected a fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Links to works

- *Voyage in search of La Pérouse – Vol.I (1800)*
 - pdf online
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• 19 September 2010



The Reverend Norman Morris led the service for Richard Munslow

The restored grave of the last known "sin-eater" in England has been at the centre of a special service in a Shropshire village churchyard.

Campaigners raised £1,000 to restore the grave of Richard Munslow, who was buried in Ratlinghope in 1906.

Sin-eaters were generally poor people paid to eat bread and drink beer or wine over a corpse, in the belief they would take on the sins of the deceased.

Frowned upon by the church, the custom mainly died out in the 19th Century.

It was prevalent in the Marches, the land around the England-Wales border, and in north Wales, but was rarely carried out anywhere else.

Believers thought the sin-eater taking on the sins of a person who died suddenly without confessing their sins would allow the deceased's soul to

go to heaven in peace.

While most of the sin-eaters were poor people or beggars, Mr Munslow was a well-established farmer in the area.

This grave at Ratlinghope is now in an excellent state of repair but I have no desire to reinstate the ritual that went with it
The Reverend Norman Morris

The Reverend Norman Morris, the vicar of Ratlinghope, a village of about 100 residents on the Long Mynd near Church Stretton, led the "God's Acre" service at St Margaret's Church.

Mr Morris said: "It was a very odd practice and would not have been approved of by the church but I suspect the vicar often turned a blind eye to the practice."

Locals began the collection to restore the grave, which had fallen into disrepair in recent years, believing it would be good to highlight the custom and Mr Munslow's place in religious history.

It took a few months to raise the £1,000 needed to pay for the work, carried out by local stonemason Charles Shaw.

Mr Morris said: "This grave at Ratlinghope is now in an excellent state of repair but I have no desire to reinstate the ritual that went with it."

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Thursday, 25 June 2015

Gyre Carline – a Scots term, from the Norse for Old Woman – was a force to be reckoned with. In some accounts a giantess, others a witch or hag, she inspired terror in the hearts of those who heard tales of her exploits, and perhaps with good reason.

One such story involves the smiting of Lochar Moss. During a gathering of fellow witches, several of Gyre Carline's horses were swept away by a high tide as they went for a ride during a gathering on Locharbrigg Hill. The area below, Lochar Moss, was then open sea, but, after a wave of Gyre Carline's staff, it turned at once into a vast, boggy mass.



Lochar Moss

Locharbrigg Hill, about four miles from Dumfries, Scotland, had a long association with witches. It was especially known for the meetings held there on Walpurgis Night, 30th April, where witches and warlocks gathered for dancing and revels. On these occasions, Gyre Carline was second in importance only to Satan himself, presiding over the initiation of new members and the following elaborate celebrations.

Parallels can be drawn between Gyre Carline's rides with her followers and the Hallowmass Ride or Wild Hunt. Faeries, witches or the dead were

said to ride through the sky, the accompanying wind often drawing up those who got in its path.

A rhyme supposedly sung by the followers of Gyre Carline during their rides is translated as follows:

*"When the grey owl has three times hooted,
When the grinning cat has three times mewed,
When the fox has yowled three times in the wood,
At the red moon cowering behind the cloud;*

*When the stars have crept deep in the mist,
Lest spells had picked them out of the air,
Up horses all, without more ado,
Ride, ride, for Locherbrigg hill!*

The Wild Hunt - by Peter Nicolai Arbo

There are many references to Gyre Carline. According to Sir Walter Scot, the Gyre Carline was identified also with the Fairy Queen or Mother Witch:

"A gigantic and malignant female, the Hecate of this mythology, who rode on the storm and marshalled the rambling host of wanderers under her grim banner. This hag (in all respects the reverse of the Mab or Titania of the Celtic creed) was called Nicneven in that later system which blended the faith of the Celts and of the Goths on this subject."

In *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*, R. Cromek describes Gyre Carline thus:



"... reckoned the mother of glamour, and near a-kin to Satan himself. She is believed to preside over the 'Hallowmass Rades;' and mothers frequently frighten their children by threatening to give them to M'Neven, or the Gyre Carline. She is described as wearing a long grey mantle, and carrying a wand, which, like the miraculous rod of Moses, could convert water into rocks, and sea into solid land.

Between two and three miles wide, the area of land that Gyre Carline supposedly struck is still known as Lochar Moss today. For centuries it fulfilled the role of a natural moat, serving as protection for Dumfries. The peat there was also cut and dried and used to provide fuel. There were plans to drain the area as early as 1754, when the engineer John Smeaton's suggestions were drawn up but not carried out, and it was finally drained in the 19th century. The transformation of the land by Gyre Carline may also have at least a little basis in fact: archaeological finds, including the remains of boats, were discovered during the draining, suggesting that the area had once indeed been open water.



Posted by Willow C Winsham at 01:44

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A reconstruction of Sputnik 1.

The Cold War is a fascinating time in our history, when the United States and its allies were united against the Soviet Bloc, consisting of the Soviet Union, its satellite states, and its Communist allies. The lands beyond the Iron Curtain were a mystery to most Americans, a giant red enigma frightening in its size and implacable in its intent. This combined with the frantic efforts on both sides to one up each other in nearly every sphere of endeavor—especially technology—led to the strange story of The Lost Cosmonauts.

Mysterious transmissions

To understand this legend, we must begin with the first artificial satellite to orbit the Earth—Sputnik 1. Needless to say that the thought of a Soviet made machine orbiting high over head with intents unknown was traumatic for America and her allies, but it wasn't a pair of American amateur radio operators who took the initiative to snoop on the satellite but rather Italians. The brothers Achille and Giovanni Judica-Cordiglia, using surplus American equipment, managed to pick up the monotonous radio transmission issuing from Sputnik 1. This feat made them something like local celebrities, a fame that grew when they made the sensational claim that they had caught horrific signals from failed Soviet manned space missions.

These alleged transmissions were first recorded in May of 1960, when the brothers claimed to have heard a manned space craft issuing a distress signal that it had gone off course. Later that same year came an even more disturbing signal—an SOS in Morse code that faded over time, suggesting that its craft of origin was moving away from the Earth. From then on the claims became even more sensational and disturbing. One recording allegedly captured a dying cosmonaut's fading heart beat and ragged final breaths as he suffocated to death in his capsule. Another recorded a female cosmonaut's frantic final signals as she burnt up upon reentry. There were several more that involved cosmonauts flying off into the void of space after their equipment failed or after their capsules skidded off the Earth's atmosphere like a flat rock across the surface of a pond.

If true, the implications are horrifying. Few deaths could be more terrible than being lost in the vastness of Deep Space in a capsule about the size of a small car, slowly suffocating as you use up your last oxygen reserves. I can see why Westerners at the time would find this scenario believable—after all, everyone knew how small a premium the Communist countries put on human life, their compulsive tendency toward secrecy, and they also knew (to a lesser extent) how crazy dangerous the space program was. It was a simple enough matter to put two and two together and surmise that the Soviet space program must have been like a meat grinder. But how true was that, really?

More legend than fact

Certainly, more people died in the Soviet program than their American counterparts. Most of these deaths didn't come out until after the Soviet archives were opened after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 90's. But it would be inaccurate to say that the Soviets simply threw cosmonauts through the proverbial wood chipper until they could get their rockets working properly. A cursory examination of this notion shows how ludicrous it is—after all, both astronauts and cosmonauts were highly trained professionals. It'd be insane to sacrifice them recklessly simply by virtue of their expertise, let alone the fact that they're human beings.

But a look at the alleged transmissions themselves and the stories around them shows they were little more than sensationalism. For one, any vehicle undergoing reentry is under radio silence, since rocketing through the atmosphere at several hundred miles an hour results in a lot of radio interference. Second, most of the vehicles said to be zooming out of the Earth's orbit were incapable of going fast enough to achieve escape velocity from Earth's orbit. Once they did achieve orbit, unless some force powerful enough to yank them out of Earth's gravity worked on them, they wouldn't just suddenly whip out of the Earth's grip. Once you're in orbit, there are only two ways to go unless worked upon by an outside force—you either remain stationary or starting heading back down to Earth.

Suffice it to say, it doesn't seem very likely that there are any lost cosmonauts zooming through the endless blackness of space. While it is true that Achille and Giovanni did make some amazing recordings of both Soviet and American spacecraft in orbit, the dark tales of lost cosmonauts are nothing more than sensationalism.

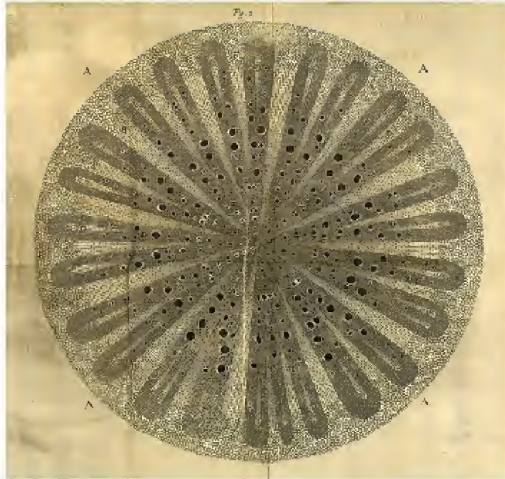
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In the 82 illustrated plates included in his 1680 book *The Anatomy of Plants*, the English botanist Nehemiah Grew revealed for the first time the inner structure and function of plants in all their splendid intricacy. Brian Garret, professor of philosophy at McMaster University, explores how Grew's pioneering 'mechanist' vision in relation to the floral world paved the way for the science of plant anatomy.



Nehemiah Grew (1641-1712) is best remembered for his careful and novel observations on plant anatomy, for his role in the development of comparative anatomy and as one of the first naturalists to utilize the microscope in the study of plant morphology. His most lasting work, containing his observations and impressive illustrations, is most certainly his early work **The Anatomy of Plants* begun as a philosophical history of plants* published in 1682. Although Grew continued to publish throughout his life, especially on the chemical properties of various substances, all but the *The Anatomy* have fallen into obscurity.

Grew was a doctor by profession, receiving his degree from the university of Leiden in 1671. He was the son of a nonconformist and supporter of parliament, who was briefly imprisoned while his son gave lectures to the Royal Society and dedicated his books to the King. Nehemiah had little of his father's political inclination, although he inherited some of the latter's nonconformist religious views. He practiced medicine in London where he met John Wilkins (1614-1672), one of the founders of the Royal Society, who was likely attracted by the younger man's opinions. Wilkins was impressed and he recommended Grew to the Royal Society for membership. Grew later served as secretary to the society, along with Robert Hooke (1635-1703), the infamous virtuoso and inventor. Like Hooke, Grew utilized the microscope for his investigations into plant anatomy. Along with Marcello Malpighi, Grew is remembered for establishing the observational basis for botany for the next 100 years.

As Grew acknowledged, Wilkins' encouragement was crucial to his work, both intellectually and financially. Having been made a member under Wilkins' influence, he was engaged by the Royal Society at 50 pounds a year to research plant anatomy. But getting actually paid another matter and Grew had to plead with the society to receive what he was due. In his later life he practiced medicine in London and Coventry. Throughout the 1670's Grew wrote short pamphlets on botany (often in Latin) and in 1680 translated and compiled them together under the title *The Anatomy of Plants*. He published a number of minor essays in the Transactions of the Royal Society, for example, "The description of an...Hummingbird" and "Some observations touching the Nature of Snow." In 1681 he published *The comparative anatomy of stomachs and guts*, packed full of curious observations. 1683 saw the publication of *New Experiments and useful observations concerning sea water made Fresh* and in 1697 his *Treatise of the nature and Use of Purging Salt contained in Epsom and such other waters*.

In his last work, *Cosmologia Sacra* (1701), Grew turned to philosophy and theology in order to demonstrate “the Truth and Excellency of the Bible.”

In many ways a contemporary review best sums up the significance of Grew’s scientific work, since much of that significance is obscure today:

In general, it is noted by our Author, that it will here appear, that there are those things which are little less wonderful within a Plant than within an Animal; that a Plant, like an Animal hath Organical parts, some whereof may be called its Bowels; that every Plant hath Bowels of divers kinds, containing divers liquors; that even a Plant lives partly upon Air, for the reception whereof it hath peculiar Organs. Again, that all the said Organs, Bowels, or other parts are as artificially made, and as punctually for place and number composed together as all the Mathematical Lines of a flower or Face; that the Staple of the Stuff is so exquisitely fine, that no Silkworm is able to draw so small a thred; that by all these means the ascent of the Sap, the Distribution of the Air, the Confection of several sorts of Liquors, as Lymphus, Milks, Oyls, Balsoms, with other acts of Vegetation, are all contrived and brought about in a Mechanical way. – [*Philosophical transactions*, 1675].

The significance for this 17th century reviewer is the ‘Mechanical way’ and Grew’s Organ-ism; that plants possess organs and structure. It wasn’t certain before the 17th century that plants had much internal structure in which distinct parts or organs played distinct roles. It was often thought, especially during the Renaissance, that the external shape of a plant was a clue or signature to its use, but whether there was anything resembling organs in plants was contested. A generation earlier, in his *Of Bodies* (1644), virtuoso (and all-round blow-hard) Sir Kenelm Digby (1603-1665) downplayed the existence of distinct organs in plants. However, Grew’s detailed observations established without a doubt that plants were analyzable into functional and morphological units, reinvigorating a tradition that went back to Theophrastus.

Grew is remembered for his detailed descriptions of plant anatomy and with him we see the beginning of modern comparative anatomy. He was guided by the idea that there may be similarities of function between animals and plants and this led him to look for equivalent organs in each. He thus believed in the circulation of sap, on analogy with William Harvey’s discovery of the circulation of blood in animals, and he believed in a form of respiration in plants. Although the recognition of plant sexuality was old, Grew is remembered for noting the stamen as the male organ of the plant and pollen as seed. He also noted the prevalence of little bladders, or “cells” as Hooke had coined the term, especially in the parenchyma tissue (a term we have retained from Grew). Many of Grew’s observations were diachronic, putting emphasis on the development of the plant and its structures. The growth of a plant he deemed to be a function of sap circulating through the tissue, carrying and adding material to the plant. His observations on the bud of the flower revealed the complicated folding of the unexpanded leaves, something that had not been previously seen with the naked eye.

Grew’s mechanism consisted in his adherence to observations and his avoidance of explanations invoking vital forces, signatures, sympathies and antipathies. Also to be avoided

was the direct hand, intervention, or guidance by God. Instead the mechanist looks for natural or secondary causes for the phenomena and the laws that govern them. Grew invokes no "occult" or hidden forces, although he offers a great deal of "wild" chemical speculation in his botanical and medical studies. The mechanistic project was a deliberate attempt to offer explanations of phenomena in terms that were "corporeal", material or physical, however these difficult terms were to be interpreted. The mechanical philosophy allowed the researcher to think much like an engineer – how to make available materials do the task that is desired. The engineering image was also theologically acceptable: God is the engineer who constructed the mechanisms of nature and as such nature can be seen as "artificial", the product of God's industry. As natural philosophers (or scientists) we can uncover how these artifacts are constructed and how they function, by analogy with discovering how a machine, such as a clock, is constructed and functions.

Grew published his philosophical and theological views late in life in his *Cosmologia Sacra: or a Discourse of the Universe as it is the Creature and Kingdom of God*. In his last book Grew argues for a number of doctrines. He divides the natural causes within the universe into vital and corporeal components. Living and cognitive creatures have their origins in a Vital Principle, distinct from matter, yet bodies are necessary for the existence of Life. Life, being "more excellent" [p.34] than mere physical motion, requires an "Excellent, and so a distinct Subject, to which it belongs. And therefore something, which is Substantial, yet Incorporeal". Grew's vitalism was not uncommon for the time, especially among the doctors, and reflects the neo-Platonist heritage found in many influential naturalists such as John Ray (1627-1705). But Grew revealed his sympathies for nonconformist religious thought in his account of miracles. Grew asserts a form of Deism: that once God has created the world in accordance with His laws, God has no further need to interfere. God acts through the world only through secondary, that is, natural causes (which includes the vital, incorporeal principle of Life). God does not act directly upon natural events but brings them about by other natural events. Miraculous events are merely those events which are rare and for which the cause is unknown; but they are not caused directly by God "...every Miracle is effected in the Use of some Second or Natural cause: Yet to make it a miracle, it is requisite, that this cause be unknown to us" [p. 195].

The denial of miracles supports Grew's dominant theme: that the universe reveals the existence and wisdom of God in its design and structure. The deist view sits happily with the mechanist perspective. Everywhere a doctor looks he can see the remarkable living machinery of the body; how organs grow to their proper and useful places. Grew took it that the teleological features of the universe revealed the wisdom of its construction. The idea was an old one but had recently gained ground in Robert Boyle's discussion *A Disquisition About Final Causes*. Grew was not as careful as the skeptical alchemist and saw many of the world's wonders as designed for the sake of Man, although he took it that the internal structures of plants were for the benefit of plants. The incredible usefulness of the Coco plant, the silkworm and of iron, indicate that the universe is well suited to Mankind. But the argument from design is often ridiculed as an argument from poor design, when one reflects on the hardships of life and the immorality of Men. Grew is not daunted by such reflections:

The most Exorbitant Phancies and Lusts of Men, illustrate the Beauty of God's Creation. One man makes all his thoughts and Pleasures, to centre in Meats and Drinks; Another, in Musick; a third, in Women; or some other Sense or Phancy so as to think of nothing else. Which, as it shows the infirmity of human nature; so the Plenitude and Perfection of the World, in being fitted, so many ways, to Beatifie Men, would they know discreetly how to use it. And the same Lust and Phancies, are many other ways turned to Good. [p.104].

Grew made his observations independently but simultaneously with Marcello Malpighi, in what might be considered a case of independent co-discovery, an interesting phenomenon in the history of science. Most famous is the co-discovery of natural selection by Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace. But if Grew and Malpighi's work counts as co-discovery it is in a very different way from that of Darwin and Wallace. Arguably, the co-discovery in plant morphology was a result of technological advances due to the invention of the microscope and was somewhat non-theoretical. Darwin and Wallace, however, discovered a law of nature, making significant theoretical advances in addition to their remarkable observations. But of course, without the meticulous work by the pioneers of botany, fruitful theory would not have arisen. Thus Nehemiah Grew must be remembered for his pioneering role in the establishment of modern botany.

Brian Jonathan Garrett is professor of philosophy at McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada. Selected publications include: "What the history of vitalism teaches us about the Hard problem of consciousness" Philosophy and phenomenological research 2006, "Teleology and Vitalism in the Natural Philosophy of Nehemiah Grew" British Journal for the History of Science 2003 and "Santayana's Treatment of teleology" Bulletin of the Santayana Society 2010. His research combines history of biology and contemporary metaphysics. In particular, he researches how the history of evolution, vitalism and teleology bears on puzzles concerning mental causation, determinism and free will.

Links to works

- *An idea of a phytological history propounded, together with a continuation of the anatomy of vegetables, particularly prosecuted upon roots* (1673)
 - pdf online
- *The Comparative Anatomy of Trunks* (1675)
 - pdf online
- *Cosmologia sacra, or a discourse of the universe as it is the creature and kingdom of God* (1701)
 - txt
 - pdf online

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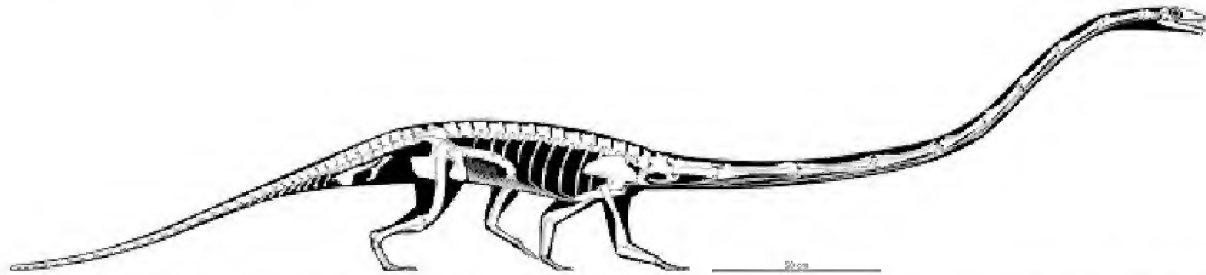
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The lifestyle of *Tanystropheus* , part 2: coastal fisher or first-day-on-the-job aquatic predator?

blogspot.co.uk

Friday, 11 December 2015



The new *Tanystropheus* cf. *longobardicus* skeletal reconstruction I presented in my last post. What the dickens did this crazy animal *do*? That's what we're discussing today.

What sort of animal was the Triassic, long-necked Eurasian protorosaur *Tanystropheus*? As we discovered in the last post, the lifestyle of *Tanystropheus* remains controversial over a century after it was first discovered. There is near universal agreement that it ate swimming prey such as fish and squid, but opinion is divided over whether it was obligated to aquatic, swimming lifestyles because of the burden of its long neck, or whether it was a water margin specialist that plundered small prey from shorelines. Previously, we discussed a core argument for the aquatic hypothesis, that the *Tanystropheus* neck would over-balance the animal. Calculations presented in the last post suggested that the mass distribution of *Tanystropheus* is not as weird as we might think, and certainly less so than that of another group of long necked reptiles we are confident lived out of water, the azhdarchid pterosaurs. Based on this very basic test, I expressed some skepticism about the neck being simply too heavy to permit a terrestrial existence.

In the second discussion, I want to look at some finer aspects of *Tanystropheus* anatomy and palaeontology, how they've been interpreted, and what they might mean for its lifestyle. There are several areas which are relevant here: what we know of *Tanystropheus* diet, the palaeoenvironmental context of *Tanystropheus* fossils, aspects of tail and limb anatomy, and of course, the functionality of its neck. There's a lot to get through here, so let's not waste any more time on preamble.

Fossil record

An obvious line of inquiry about ancient animal habits is the palaeoenvironmental bias of its fossil remains, and the fossil organisms it is found with. We mentioned last time that *Tanystropheus* was a wide-ranging taxon, occurring across Europe, Israel and China in locations representing the coasts and shallow waters around the ancient Tethys ocean. About half of *Tanystropheus* fossils come from shallow marine settings, the rest being derived from more coastal environments: river and estuarine environments, lagoons, intertidal settings and so forth (for a brief overview, check out the *Fossilworks* entry on this animal: there's a few localities missing, and the 'terrestrial' occurrence of *Tanystropheus* there is erroneous, but it gives a flavour of its depositional context). We often find marine fish and seagoing reptiles in the same beds as *Tanystropheus*, but it also occurs alongside terrestrial or freshwater species such as temnospondyls, terrestrial reptiles, stem mammals and plants in a number of locations. The link of *Tanystropheus* to these faunas seems complex: in at least one locality with fluctuating marine and terrigenous influences, *Tanystropheus* fossils only occur in horizons containing a mix of highly terrestrial and highly marine reptiles, without many 'intermediate' semi-aquatic species (Renesto 2005). Because *Tanystropheus* was likely not adapted for a truly seagoing lifestyle, this has been argued as evidence of it being part of a terrestrial community rather than a marine one (Renesto 2005).

arguments suggest it must be an aquatic animal to feed on squid. Aside from your good arguments citing terrestrial animals successfully hunting squid, why the assumption at all that these ancient cephalopods were open ocean animals in the first place? Even if they're comparable to modern squid, assuming based on vague morphological similarity that all squid from such deep pre-history were deep, open ocean dwellers by habit is absolutely ridiculous. And that is ignoring the habit of modern squid to still come near the shore on occasion. Is there any proof we didn't have near shore, shallow water specialist squid species at this time? Arguably, if squid are a really frequent *Tanystropheus* dietary component, that could be used as evidence of such a species existing. Even in the most aquatically adapted scenario we could attempt to force *Tanystropheus* into (ignoring all of your arguments entirely), this animal was certainly not going to be entering the sort of deep open water that we typically associate with squid anyway. They'd still need to be inhabiting or visiting rather shallow water anyway.

3. Mark Robinson 11 December 2015 at 19:43

Great article. Agree with Duane and Unknown that the poorly-/not-yet adapted theory sounds like special pleading based on the hypothesis of it being mostly-aquatic presumed to be the case *a priori*. Another way to look at it is, given the relative rarity of fossilisation events - even in littoral environments - it's difficult to imagine that an animal so maladapted for its purported day to day lifestyle would be around long enough to have given us the fossils that we currently have. A case of evolve or go extinct.

Unknown also broached an aspect that I wanted to comment on - the apparent assumption that squid from 230 million years ago lived and behaved just like squid today. They ask whether there could have been squid species that lived mostly in shallow marine waters. There are a number of living species of "inshore squid" (*Uroteuthis*) that live in varying depths of coastal marine waters and at least 3 species here in Australia which are commonly found (and fished) in estuarine waters. And who knows, perhaps there were freak species that were capable of living in brackish or even fresh water?

This leads on to my next question, regarding the taphonomy of the *Tanystropheus* and associated fossils. There are countless example of the remains of wholly-terrestrial taxa being found in fully marine, non-shore environments. There is even a bivalve-encrusted ankylosaur - *Aletopelta*. I don't think that anyone seriously suggests that this was therefore an aquatic animal. Surely, where the remains of *Tanystropheus* have been found in marine sediments in association with other obviously terrestrial fauna, the more parsimonious conclusion is that these animals died in or near estuaries or rivers and were subsequently transported out to sea, perhaps following a flooding event in the case of estuaries?

Lastly, I think that obscure dinosaur you're thinking of is called *Triacornifacies*.

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Collectively, it seems difficult to argue a strong terrestrial or marine bias in this record. *Tanystropheus* seems to have lived in or around aquatic environments, maybe with a bias to those under marine influences, but it does not seem a stranger to brackish or freshwater settings. There is perhaps something of a skewed association with marine animals, but it occurs with enough 'terrestrial' forms to keep the idea of a coastal fishing lifestyle buoyant. It would be interesting to put some actual numbers on this and see how commonly associated with terrestrial influences *Tanystropheus* is, or whether a couple of sites are skewing our perception of data. Maybe that's a job for another blog post - until then, we probably need to look at other sources of information for clearer lifestyle indications.

Gut content

The idea that *Tanystropheus* ate swimming prey is verified by the association of digested fish remains and cephalopod hooks in the gut regions of articulated specimens (Wild 1973; Li 2007). The latter is sometimes considered smoking gun evidence for the swimming *Tanystropheus* lifestyle hypothesis, it being reasoned that cephalopods are exclusively marine animals, mostly found far out to sea, and unlikely to be eaten from land (e.g. Nosotti 2007).



A number of heron species, including the globally distributed black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), are known squid-eaters. Image from Wikimedia (CC), by Kuribo.

Squiddy gut content certainly matches the idea of a marine-influenced lifestyle for *Tanystropheus*, but several non-marine, and sometimes non-aquatic, birds and mammals challenge the idea that it had to be a swimming animal to have ingested them. Examples include night herons (Hall and Cress 2008) and several types of mustelid (e.g. Hartwick 1983; Beja 1991). Exactly how night herons obtain squid is not documented in detail, but photographs of two other heron species demonstrate squid can be apprehended without venturing out to sea, or even into deep water. As might be expected, cephalopods also frequently wash up on beaches (sometimes still alive, and in huge numbers) allowing animals such as bears and wolves to also access cephalopod meat. Humans are also adept predators of squid in coastal settings. Shore-based squid angling is reportedly a growing hobby around the world (and apparently requires only very basic fishing equipment) and we routinely collect cephalopods from intertidal environments for use as bait or cooking ingredients (Denny and Gains 2007). Contrary to expectations, accessing cephalopod prey from shore environments appears quite possible for a number of differently adapted species. It seems premature to rule out a coastal fishing lifestyle for *Tanystropheus* just because it sometimes ate squid-like animals.

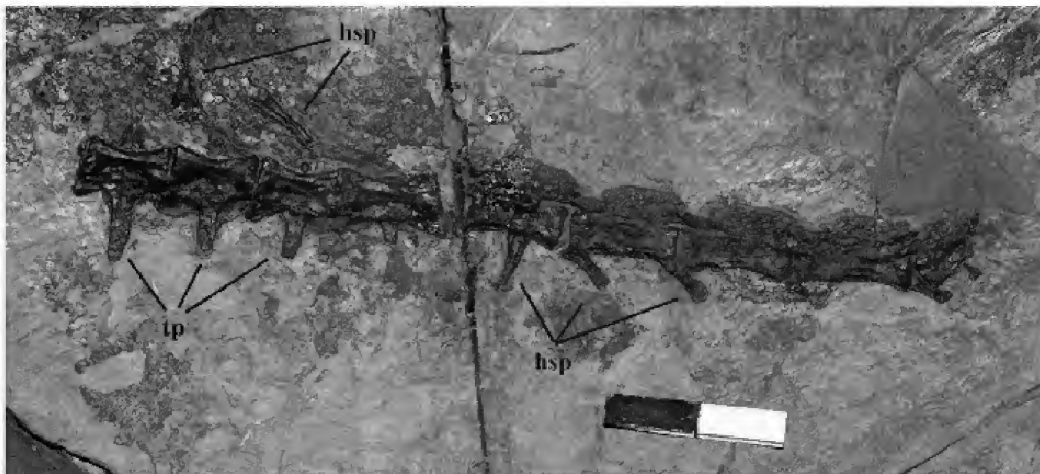
Anatomy



One of the most famous and complete *Tanystropheus longobardicus* specimens known, MSNM BES SC 1018. This illustration is from Nosotti's huge (2007) monograph.

With the fossil record and gut content providing slightly ambiguous insight into *Tanystropheus* habits, its functional anatomy is probably going to be a deciding card here. A lot has been said about the functional morphology of *Tanystropheus*, and there is a lack of consensus on many issues. For instance, its neck flexion has been described as almost 'swan-like' (Wild 1973); broom handle-stiff (Tschanz 1988), or somewhere inbetween (Renesto 2005). Its tail has been considered lousy for aquatic propulsion by some (Wild 1973; Renesto 2005) but well suited for the job by others (Tschanz 1988; Nosotti 2007). Clearly, some of these ideas must be erroneous, them being too polarised for all contributing parties to be correct. Such confused functional interpretations are not without precedent: Darren Naish and I noted a similar situation with azhdarchid pterosaurs in our 2008 paper: maybe this is simply what happens when we try to understand weird fossil species.

The main points of contention about *Tanystropheus* functional anatomy concern its tail, limbs and neck. We might link these attributes to two principle functions: locomotion and foraging. Let's start with the former. Proponents of the aquatic *Tanystropheus* hypothesis suggest the tail was the likely propulsive organ, it being considered that the limbs are too long and gracile to function as effective paddles (Tschanz 1988; Nosotti 2007), even if the foot might have some aquatic adaptations (below; Kuhn-Schwyder 1959; Wild 1973). Near 'horizontal' articulations between the posterior trunk and tail vertebrae appear to have permitted this part of the body to undulate laterally, permitting a crocodile-like sculling approach to swimming.

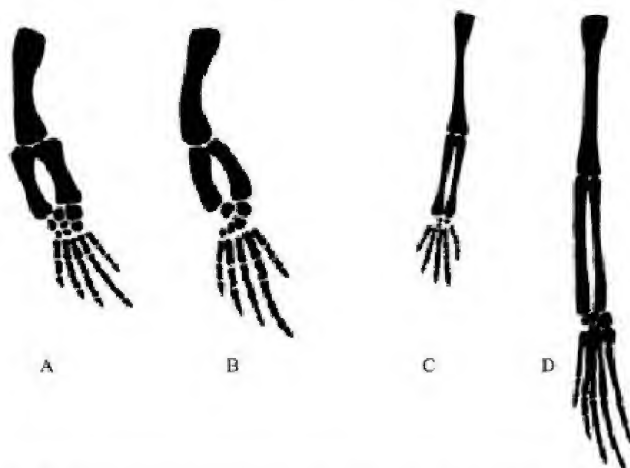


Soft-tissue preservation around the tail of *Tanystropheus* cf. *longobardicus* specimen MCSN 4451. We're

looking at the underside of the tail in the left of the image here - note the width of the soft-tissue (the big grey mass). The verts on the right are shown in left lateral view. From Renesto (2005).

A fly in the ointment here is the gross tail anatomy of *Tanystropheus*. Rather than being long, and comprised of the robust, tall vertebrae expected of a tail-propelled aquatic reptile, its tail is slender, relatively short and actually broader than tall - hardly an ideal sculling organ (Renesto 2005). This fact has been noted by proponents of the swimming lifestyle hypothesis, and it has been proposed that the tail sported some sort of fin to modify it into a swimming organ (Nosotti 2007). Well, maybe, but this idea is entirely without support from fossil data. Readers may recall that marine reptile workers have been quite ingenious in their ability to detect fins and flukes from osteological correlates, none of which are obvious in the tail of *Tanystropheus*. Moreover, preserved soft-tissues from the anterior *Tanystropheus* tail region (above) show no signs of fins but instead a broad tail base uncondusive to aquatic propulsion (Renesto 2005). Also worth mentioning is recent work on the relationship between vertebral articulation and swimming capability in crocodyliforms. They *can* reflect sculling behaviour, but articulations like those seen in *Tanystropheus* can also be linked to preventing trunk collapse during non-aquatic locomotion (Molnar et al. 2014). We could go on, but I think the point has been made that arguments for the *Tanystropheus* tail being a swimming organ are, at best, not without complication, and perhaps better described as unconvincing.

Turning our attention to the limbs, I mentioned in the last post that I was surprised how 'leggy' *Tanystropheus* was when restored as walking rather than, as we're used to seeing it, squatting. The limb proportions and girdle sizes of *Tanystropheus* compare well with non-aquatic protorosaurs such as *Macrocnemus* and *Langobardisaurus* (e.g. Renesto 2005; Nosotti 2007) and, as alluded to above, it is immediately clear that these limbs are not flippers. Not only are they too long and gracile for effective use as hydrofoils, but their long bones are hollow - unexpected features of an aquatic animal. Another protorosaur - *Dinocephalosaurus* - gives an insight into how these reptiles could modify their limbs into efficient flippers (below), and, without going into detail, they're nothing like the limbs of *Tanystropheus* (see Renesto 2005 for a long discussion of this). *Tanystropheus* limb joints are mostly robust and well-defined (but see below), and its hands and feet are strongly built and compactly structured. Some differences between hand and foot proportions can be seen: the hands are short, the feet rather long, and the latter characterised by a peculiarly long first bone in the fifth toe. The limb girdles are well developed, looking proportionally comparable (speaking from pure eyeballing here, not precise measurements) to those of large monitor lizards and crocs. I find the shoulder blade of particular interest, as it is rather large and broad, subequal in proportions to the coracoid (the lower portion of the shoulder girdle). This contrasts with many aquatic animals, which tend to maximise the size of the coracoids while reducing the scapula.



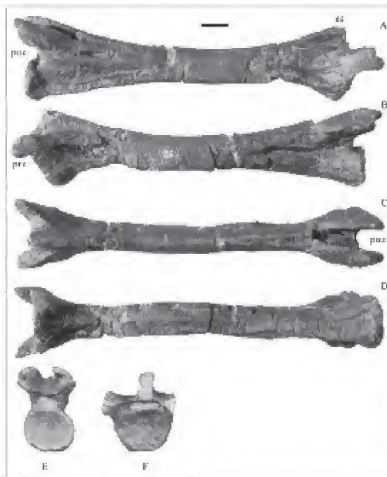
Variations in protorosaur limb anatomy, demonstrated by the aquatic *Dinocephalosaurus* (A-B) and *Tanystropheus* (C-D). Note how both the arm (A) and leg (B) of *Dinocephalosaurus* are short and wide

compared to their equivalents in *Tanystropheus* (forelimb = C, hindlimb = D), making them much more effective flippers. You can also see the reduced mineralisation in the *Tanystropheus* wrist here. From Renesto (2005).

I have to agree that *Tanystropheus* limbs were probably unchallenged by non-aquatic habits (Renesto 2005) and, if this were any other species, I don't think we'd be disputing the fact that its limbs were likely capable of terrestrial locomotion. That said, there are undeniably some hints that *Tanystropheus* was not *always* walking on land. Several authors have noted that the wrist and ankle bones of *Tanystropheus* are not as well ossified as those of other protorosaurs (e.g. Rieppel 1989; Nosotti 2007), and some have suggested that the pelvic bones may also be somewhat less defined (Rieppel 1989). Moreover, the elongation of the fifth toe is atypical for a purely terrestrial reptile, but common among aquatic creatures (see Kuhn-Schwyder 1959 for a good illustration of this point). Proposals that this made the foot somewhat paddle-like, or supported *Tanystropheus* on soft, saturated substrates do not seem unreasonable. These are fairly minor modifications to the skeleton when viewed overall however: the reduced ossification in the wrist, ankle and pelvis is pretty minor - especially when we consider how cartilage-filled the joints of many giant terrestrial archosauromorphs can be (Holliday et al. 2010) - and the reconfiguration of foot bones do not override the otherwise elongate, gracile structure of the hindlimb. My overall interpretation of the limb configuration broadly agrees with that proposed by Renesto (2005): a bauplan suited to terrestrial locomotion with some aquatic leanings, rather than sustained aquatic propulsion.

Finally, we come to the neck. I've saved discussion of this for last because I consider much of its anatomy significant in terms of where *Tanystropheus* lived and how it accessed food. Discussing it earlier might have rendered other points a bit superfluous. We make a lot of noise about how strange the neck of this animal is, but *Tanystropheus* neck anatomy frequently converges with those of other long-necked reptiles - pterosaurs and sauropods - and even some long-necked mammals. That doesn't necessarily make it less weird - it's definitely still an 'extreme' biological structure - but does help us put its neck anatomy in perspective with other animals, as well as highlighting significant adaptive differences to neck elongation in aquatic and non-aquatic species.

As with pterosaurs and sauropods, *Tanystropheus* went to great lengths to lighten its neck. Firstly, its neck is comprised of relatively few (13), slender vertebrae rather than dozens of short ones (see Rieppel et al. 2010 for discussion of cervical vertebra counts in this animal). This is about half as many as some other protorosaurs had (Rieppel et al. 2008), and a far cry from the vertebral counts of some dinosaurs (including birds). A low vertebral count reduces the number of heavy joints and muscle attachments in any part of the axial column, so this is a good basis to having a lightweight neck. More weight was lost through hollowing the bony core of each vertebra, a condition *Tanystropheus* took so far as to need bony struts supporting the interior cavities of each vertebra. Note that there is no evidence that these bones were pneumatized, seemingly lacking openings through which airsacs could penetrate the bone walls. However, simply removing bone - one of the densest, heaviest materials in our bodies - would still throw out a lot of weight. The neck was likely lightly muscled, the mid-series vertebrae being long tubes with highly reduced processes for muscle anchorage (below) - in many respects, the vertebral bodies are similar to those of azhdarchid pterosaurs. The role of these tubular, slender mid-series neck vertebrae is confusing at first, but they make a bit more sense once we realise that most terrestrial animals control their necks via musculature anchoring to the top and base of the neck. This was likely true for *Tanystropheus* and azhdarchids because anterior and posteriormost neck vertebrae are the most complex parts of the neck skeleton, presumably reflecting attachment of more muscles in these regions. We might therefore assume their necks worked in a broadly similar to those of modern animals, weird as they are.



Three dimensionally preserved mid-series *Tanystropheus* vertebra described by Dalla Vecchia (2005).

The seemingly lessened set of neck muscles on the *Tanystropheus* neck would likely limit neck performance (i.e. the size of prey that could be lifted into the air) but, again, would facilitate weight reduction. Strong, restricting joints between the majority of the neck bones and bundles of elongate cervical ribs aided reduction of musculature further, passively resisting inter-vertebral movements which otherwise require muscle action or thick ligaments to control. Elongation of cervical ribs provides another bonus for mass reduction, this trait being linked to shifting muscles down the neck in sauropods and thus lightening the neck anterior (Taylor and Wedel 2013). With passive support structures in place, muscles operating around the neck base may have been able to support and move the neck quite easily. Indeed, areas where neck elevator muscles (such as levator scapulae and the trapezius) anchor on the shoulder blade are unusually broad and well developed in *Tanystropheus* compared to other protorosaurs, and certainly a lot larger than those of long-necked aquatic animals (Araújo and Correia 2015). These are useful muscles to emphasise if you're looking to economise neck mass, being able to both lift and turn the neck by simply varying the symmetry of their activation. We also see a good set of short, robust cervical ribs and broad coracoids at the base of the neck, anchoring muscles related to strong downward neck motion (unless *Tanystropheus* differed from all other tetrapods). As Mark Robinson preemptively commented on my last post, this is starting to sound a lot like works like a mechanical crane: a lightweight, strong beam operated by long muscles and ligaments (cables and pulleys in our analogy) from a powerful, mobile base. Quite how much motion was possible at the neck base is debated, but the fact that a number of articulated *Tanystropheus* specimens are preserved with distinctly elevated neck bases suggests it was more flexible than the rest of the neck, and perhaps capable of a large range of motion (Renesto 2005). This, of course, has implications for balance: if the neck could be drawn up as in fossil specimens the centre of mass would be quite far back in the body (see the last post for more on *Tanystropheus* mass distribution).

To me, this is all sounding quite sauropod- and azhdarchid-like: an economically constructed neck capable of somewhat limited, but sufficient motion to procure food in terrestrial habits, albeit food that doesn't put up too much of a fight. By contrast, the *Tanystropheus* neck compares quite poorly to those of long-necked aquatic animals. For one, we expect a large number of short vertebrae in long-necked aquatic animals, this permitting greater numbers of muscles working on the neck skeleton. Aquatic animal neck bones are frequently expanded to enlarge the size of muscles attaching to them, these being required to move long appendages through viscous aquatic media. This makes for a heavy neck, but perennial support provided by water renders this a moot issue. Indeed, weight is often a commodity in water rather than a problem, it providing ballast against air-filled lungs or positively buoyant tissues - it's widely known that swimming tetrapods often have entirely solid bones to increase their mass further. The neck of *Tanystropheus* doesn't really match any of these features. While the number of neck bones is somewhat increased compared to other protorosaurs, the aquatic *Dinocephalosaurus* has almost twice as many more - 25 - in a neck of similar proportions. *Tanystropheus* neck length is mainly achieved

by stretching each vertebra tremendously, the addition of another three vertebrae perhaps merely being a supportive measure to boost neck length overall (birds and sauropods do the same thing - adding more neck vertebrae is not strictly an aquatic adaptation). Reduction of neck mass in *Tanystropheus* neck (and limb) bones is also at odds with expectations for an aquatic animal, the hollow cores, stiffened joints and posterior displacement of musculature being unnecessary and even disadvantageous in an aquatic setting. It's actually hard to imagine the neck of *Tanystropheus* being pulled through water efficiently at all, the reduced muscle profile and long vertebrae being quite problematic and under-powered for this task. It certainly does not seem well suited to chasing and grabbing fast moving aquatic prey such as squid and fish. To me, *Tanystropheus* neck anatomy just seems to make a lot more sense out of water and, given how much emphasis *Tanystropheus* put on its neck tissues, I think this is a pivotal consideration when attempting to understanding its lifestyle.

Summary time: a twist in the tale?

Let's sum up these three lines of discussion. The fossil record of *Tanystropheus* suggests we could find it in a variety of aquatic settings - we might average these out to say it was a denizen of coastal and nearshore environments. It clearly had a taste for seafood, although we need to be careful not to overstate what this might mean about its lifestyle. Anatomically, it seems its propulsor apparatus is best suited to non-aquatic settings and that strange neck finds overwhelmingly superior comparison to terrestrial tetrapods than it does aquatic ones. I therefore have to agree with pretty much everything said about *Tanystropheus* anatomy reflecting a 'coastal fishing' habit rather than a strictly aquatic one (e.g. Renesto 2005). I actually struggle to understand how this animal would function as a swimming predator given that its anatomy seems poorly suited to an aquatic lifestyle. Indeed, even proponents of this lifestyle acknowledge that *Tanystropheus* must have been a sluggish, ineffectual aquatic predator, limited to ambushing prey from darkness (e.g. Nosotti 2007). This brings us to a twist to our *Tanystropheus* story: acknowledging some big issues with the *Tanystropheus* swimming hypothesis, Nosotti (2007) proposed that it was a newcomer to the aquatic realm, still carrying a lot of anatomical baggage from terrestrial ancestors. It doesn't look much like an aquatic animal because, in evolutionary terms, it's *Tanystropheus* first day on the job and it's still learning the adaptive ropes for being a successful marine predator.



My preferred lifestyle interpretation for *Tanystropheus*: a Triassic croc-o-heron which snatched prey from shorelines and promontories around coastal waterways. Note the animals perched on rocks out to sea - I have no problem with this animal swimming *per se* (as noted above, there is reason to think it was somewhat aquatically adapted), I just don't think it lived in water.

Personally, I find this sort of argumentation weak. It implies *Tanystropheus* is somehow exempt from relationships between morphology and function well established in other animals, and seems like an excuse to dismiss contrary evidence more than it does a robust hypothesis. Above all else, this proposal

suffers from elevating the proposal of aquatic *Tanystropheus* to a foregone truth of its palaeobiology, and structuring other lines of evidence around that - I do not think this is not a positive approach to these sort of palaeontological investigations. I would argue contrarily that, when viewed in context of other tetrapods, the weight of evidence is *against* an aquatic lifestyle, but quite consistent with a more terrestrially-based habit, and that this forms a better starting point for considering its lifestyle. To my mind, *Tanystropheus* taphonomy, gut content and functional anatomy are fully consistent with it being a Triassic variant on a heron, an animal which struck at swimming prey while supported on land or in bodies of shallow water. Its smattering of minor aquatic adaptations might have been useful to cross small bodies of water, support itself on wet, soft substrates and access better fishing sites. However, the morphological onus seems to be on movement unsupported by deep water, and it might be assumed these formed a minority of adaptive pressures on *Tanystropheus* anatomy. Although it is difficult to think of a perfect modern analogue for this, we might find comparable functionality and behaviours in a variety of birds, crocodylians and lizards.

OK, time to call it a day with *Tanystropheus* for now, although we're not done with weird Triassic taxa yet. I've definitely caught their bug, and I'm sure we'll be spending time with several more of these fascinating oddballs in the near future. Before then, the last post I have planned this year returns us to familiar dinosaur territory, featuring an especially obscure species none of you will be familiar with. I can barely remember what it's called... *Threecerasaurus*? *Trihornedabottoms*? Dang - I'm sure I'll remember by next time.

This overly-long article and its artwork are made possible by *Patreon*

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3 comments:

1. Duane Nash 11 December 2015 at 11:44

Nice post(s). Look forward to more weird Triassic stuff, hopefully drepanosaurs get some attention. The arguments all make sense. One thing that I want to iterate again - something that you hinted at in this post- is this penchant for some paleontologists to argue that an animal "has unusual adaptations because it is just in the incipient stages of adapting to an amphibious or aerial mode of life..." For me this argument is pretty weak >most of the time<. 1) For starters it almost sounds Lamarckian as if the animal is striving to achieve some more perfect mode of existence. 2) This piggybacks on the first point - there is no "end game" in evolution. An extinct gliding animal that lived in dense canopy forest - when seen through the hindsight 20/20 looking glass of the fossil record - might appear to be an under-equipped flyer, but for what the animal has to do in its day to day life it is just fine. Same argument for proto-whales. From our perspective they might appear to be a "less perfect" predecessor to modern whales but for their environment sloshing around intertidal estuaries they were just fine. Hopefully that make sense I just think that it is important to take a wider view of these animals and - at the end of the day - they have to make reasonable sense as animals that live, breathe, eat, mate, feed in their respective environments. Sometimes just taking this more practical, common sense view is lacking.

2. Unknown 11 December 2015 at 13:02

Duane hit the nail on the head already reinforcing your point. We do have intermediary forms (I was thinking of fish becoming terrestrially adapted, but proto-whales are a better example), but none of these are considered mal-adapted, just adapted to different environments and situations at those specific points in time. Or for a modern analogue (er, kind of), the mudskipper is very good at living in the intertidal zone, scampering about perfectly well out of water, hunting, but also fleeing to water when necessary. It is not particularly good at swimming, or at terrestrial locomotion compared to animals more specialised to either realm, but no one looks at the mudskipper and declares this some sort of incipient stage that is crap at what it's trying to do (becoming totally terrestrial presumably). We should not look at fossil animals and apply these weird rules that we absolutely do not apply to modern animals, because that rather strongly implies we're wrong. If this sort of thing was ever true, we'd see it at least ONCE in a modern species, but we just don't. Applying stupid arbitrary ideas solely to extinct animals is certainly an ongoing issue...I remember Darren bringing up the apparently popular theory of elaborate dinosaur headgear being basic species recognition signalling. I'll consider it when someone convinces me that antelope horns or narwhal tusks are modern species recognition devices. Anyway, the main reason I was commenting was on the squid dietary element. You said that some

Friday 11 December 2015

Viking hoard discovery reveals little-known king 'airbrushed from history'

A hoard of Viking coins could change our understanding of English history, after showing how Alfred the Great 'airbrushed' out a rival king



A rare coin showing King Alfred 'the Great' of Wessex (r.871-99) and King Ceolwulf II of Mercia (874-79) A rare coin showing King Alfred 'the Great' of Wessex (r.871-99) and King Ceolwulf II of Mercia (874-79)

A Viking hoard discovered by an amateur metal detectorist could prompt the re-writing of English history, after experts claimed it shows how **Alfred the Great** "airbrushed" a rival king from history.

Ceolwulf II of Mercia is barely mentioned in contemporary records and largely forgotten by history, only briefly described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as an "unwise King's thane".



The hoard was found by James Mather, a metal detectorist, near Watlington in October

But as of today, his reputation might be rescued after a haul of coins dug up after more than 1,000 years suggested he in fact had a powerful alliance with Alfred, ruling their kingdoms as equals.

The hoard, made up of 186 coins, seven items of jewellery and 15 ingots, was found by amateur metal detectorist James Mather on his 60th birthday, after he uncovered it in a muddy field.

A selection of the coins show two emperor-like figures, believed to represent Alfred and Ceolwulf, and are now known to have been produced extensively in both kingdoms.

Speaking at the unveiling of the hoard at the British Museum, its curator of Early Medieval coinage said the discoveries gave a "very different picture" to the **legacies set down in the history books**, as he suggests it could counter the "very bad press" given to Ceolwulf II thus far.



a selection of items in the Watlington Hoard after examination work

Gareth Williams said: "Here is a more complex political picture in the 870s which was deliberately misrepresented in the 890s after Alfred has taken over the whole of Ceolwulf's kingdom."

"Perhaps we should be thinking more of Stalin and Trotsky, with Ceolwulf being airbrushed out of history because he's no longer convenient."

"That of course gives a very different picture of history of **Alfred** the great national hero, defeating the Vikings."



An X-ray of the Watlington Hoard

It sheds new light on a very poorly understood period in English history
Dr Gareth Williams

The coins date from the late 870s; the only example of a Viking hoard from the era.

- Treasure hunter guards biggest find of Roman coins by sleeping in his car

Only one example of the double figured coin from each kingdom has been found previously, with archaeologists left unsure as to whether it was a "one-off" mint.

The new discovery reveals how the coins were produced in both Ceolwulf and Alfred's names, far more extensively than previously thought and in a number of different mints.



James Mather at the spot where he made his exciting find

"It sheds new light on a very poorly understood period in English history," said Dr Williams.

"Poor Ceolwulf gets a very bad press in Anglo-Saxon history, because the only accounts we have of his reign come from the latter part of Alfred's reign."

It has been absolutely amazing
James Mather, who found it

"What we can now see emerging from his hoard is that this was a more sustained alliance with extensive coinage and lasting for some years."

The haul, known to be **Viking** thanks to the style of

jewellery, was found earlier this year in a field near Watlington, Oxfordshire, by Mr Mather, who has been metal detecting as a hobby for 20 years.

He came across it after a futile five hour hunt, moments after he had decided to call it a day and go home.



James Mather holds rare Viking arm bracelets

Coming across an ingot he recognised as Viking after seeing a similar example in the British Museum, he went on to discover the entire hoard buried in the mud.

After alerting an officer from the **Portable Antiquities Scheme**, he returned to check the hoard was safely in situ in the field four times over the next five days, until an expert could travel down.

From there, a "haggis-shaped" mound of earth was removed in tact, with the treasure inside, and transported to the **British Museum** in a make-shift wrapping of clingfilm and bubblewrap.

Mr Mather, who joked his two adult children are now newly impressed by his hobby, said: "Discovering this exceptional hoard has been a really great experience and helping excavate it with archaeologists from the Portable Antiquities Scheme on my 60th birthday was the icing on the cake.



jewellery including bangles from the Watlington Hoard during conservation and examination work.

"It has been absolutely amazing. The range of emotions you go through, from shock to disbelief to joy – it all becomes a bit surreal."

The hoard will now be examined with a view to being classed as treasure, whereupon Mr Mather and the landowner of the field in which it was discovered will receive a significant payout.

The haul has not yet been valued, but good quality individual coins from the era can fetch five-figure

sums.

- Amateur treasure hunter's £1m find of Anglo Saxon coins

It is then likely to go on display to the public locally, with the the Ashmolean Museum and Oxfordshire Museums Service already working with the British Museum to examine it.

Ed Vaizey, Minister of State for Culture, said "Fascinating finds like this Viking hoard are a great example of the 1 million **discoveries** that have been unearthed by the public since 1997.

"Sharing these archaeological treasures with the country means protecting them for future generations to learn more about our nation's rich and complex past."

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Nuclear Vogelsang: The Lost Soviet City Everyone Wants to Disappear

atlasobscura.com

by Ciarán Fahey / 15 Dec 2014



Vogelsang in East Germany (all photographs by the author)

Lurking in a Brandenburg forest north of Berlin is a hidden city with a sinister past being quietly erased off the face of the Earth.

It's so secret, no locals were allowed near it, no local officials informed of its Cold War activities. This was one party where the guests told the hosts they weren't welcome.

Vogelsang in East Germany was where the Soviet Union once had atomic weapons primed for Western Europe,

ready to launch in retaliation for a preemptive strike or in preemption of an imminent retaliation. Now the whole site is abandoned, eerie, still, with curtains fluttering through broken school, shop, and barrack windows. Giant bunkers on the garrison's outskirts stand empty and desolate, doors creaking forlornly, their stash of deadly nukes gone and with it their raison d'être. Germany would rather forget this ghost town ever existed, despite the remaining Soviet art, the murals, or Lenin's statue. Demolition workers are knocking it down so the forest can move back in.



The Soviets began clearing and constructing on the 2,000-hectare site in 1951. The garrison, one of the few complexes purpose-built by the Russians, became home to around 15,000 soldiers and civilians, some 550 buildings, lots of tanks, anti-aircraft missiles, tactical missiles, and nuclear missiles. Soldiers carried out maneuvers at night to avoid Allied surveillance, and locals had no idea what was going on behind those guarded walls.

As part of "Operation Atom," R5-M (SS-3 Shyster) missiles were brought here and to another base at nearby Neuthymen (Fürstenberg) by the elite 72nd RVGK Engineer Brigade in January of 1959. The nuclear warheads followed in mid-April. Four of the weapons were apparently aimed at England, to take out Thor (PGM-17) missile bases in Norfolk and Lincolnshire, while others were for United States air bases in Western Europe, and still others pointed at population centers such as London, Paris, Brussels, the Ruhrgebiet, and Bonn. Each missile weighed 29.1 tons and was 20.74 meters long. They were over 20 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Four mobile launching units and 12 missiles were ready for deployment between the two bases, capable of striking targets up to 1,200 kilometers away.

The East Germans were not informed, and the missiles were delivered under cover of darkness using back roads so they wouldn't find out. "The Soviet Army leadership did not give the GDR (German Democratic Republic) military leadership any information about the stationing of missiles in Vogelsang and Fürstenberg. In my position at the time as head of the GDR air force, I had no knowledge of any action of that type," General Heinz Kessler said in 1999.

The Russians withdrew the weapons in a hurry after just a few months, in August, likely for political reasons with Nikita Khrushchev visiting American counterpart Dwight Eisenhower in September. However, another sneaky deployment — this time with R-12 (SS-4 Sandal) nuclear missiles capable of reaching 2,000 kilometers — was supposed to have been sent here between 1961 and 1962 during the top secret "Operatsiya Tuman." It was so secret, not even the soldiers knew where they were being deployed.



"Officers and career servicemen for a long time had no clue that the road ahead of them crosses the western border of the USSR and transited to the GDR," reported the commander in charge, Colonel Vladimir Aleksandrov from Smolensk. He left for Berlin on September 17, going first to Wünsdorf — where Soviet military forces in Germany were headquartered — then up to Vogelsang and Fürstenberg with his team to make preparations for deployment.

Launch sites were constructed close to both bases, buildings and storage facilities built, communications equipment provided, and slabs were laid for command vehicles, launch vehicles, and technical batteries. "Road signs were put up, repairs were made to the road bed and bridges were reinforced. Work was performed to camouflage both BSPs (launch sites)," Col. Aleksandrov said.



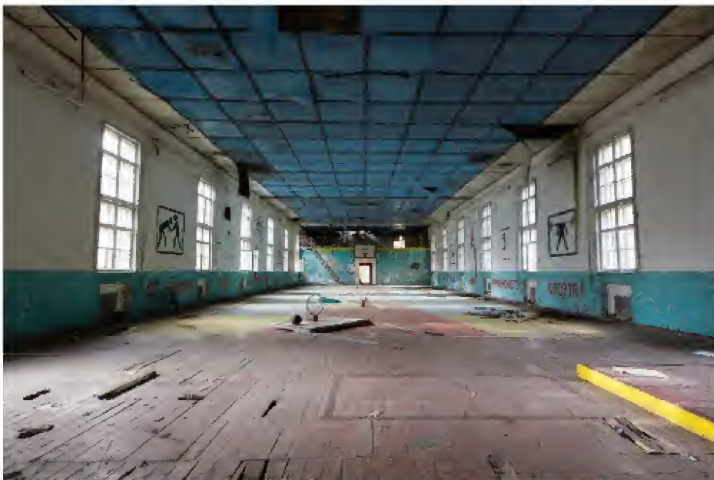
With preparations completed, he returned to the USSR on October 11. The new independent missile regiment set up at Zhitkovichi (Belarus), and underwent training over November and December before waiting another month for the order to leave for the GDR. "Everyone agonized from the suspense. But the command to load up never came," Col. Aleksandrov said. "On several occasions I reported to division command [...] but each time I

got the same answer: 'Wait. Increase the regiment's training and combat readiness'."

In the end, the Soviet Union's production of the R-14 Chusovaya missile (SS-5 Slean), with its much greater range, eliminated the need for armed nuclear missiles in Germany. Col. Aleksandrov was given the order to disband on July 12, 1962.

Meanwhile, there was enough going on through the Cold War and beyond to keep Vogelsang busy. The Red Army's 25th Tank Division was based here, and the Russians didn't leave until 1994. Rumors of TR-1 (SS-12 Scaleboard) nuclear missiles being stored at Vogelsang between 1983 and 1988 appear to be unfounded.

Now the whole site is being torn down. Mechanical rubble makers have already chewed their way through a sizable chunk of history from the north, and they'll keep going until it's gone. Vogelsang is huge, though, and no matter how hard they try, they will never fully erase the traces of its Soviet past.



Ciarán Fahey explores the stunning ruins of Germany at Abandoned Berlin, where you can discover more of his photographs and writing.

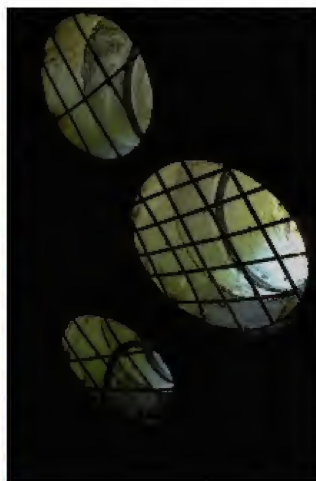
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19 January 2011

It is not only we here at the Board of Longitude project who appreciate Nevil Maskelyne (1732-1811) - a dynamic Commissioner of the Longitude who was Astronomer Royal for 46 years and has been unfairly maligned in some of the modern representations of the events surrounding John Harrison's marine timekeepers.

A family of famous British magicians and inventors also trumpeted their ties to the Astronomer Royal! John Nevil Maskelyne (1839-1917) actually trained as a watchmaker before becoming a nationally famous stage magician, and a debunker of Victorian spirit manifestations like fellow magician Harry Houdini. Maskelyne gave flamboyant evidence for the prosecution in the London trial of the American psychic Henry Slade in 1876, which was brought by a young zoologist and supported by scientists including Charles Darwin and the zoologist Thomas H. Huxley. John was also responsible for a number of inventions including the public pay toilet... whose initial cost resulted in the euphemism to 'spend a penny'.

One of John's sons, another Nevil Maskelyne (1863-1924), became a magician as well and was one of the early pioneers of wireless telegraphy. His son, Jasper Maskelyne (1902-1973), was another stage magician and harnessed his magical and engineering skills to aid British military intelligence during the Second World War.

There is apparently some debate over whether the magical Maskelynes were *truly* related to our Nevil, as they claimed. However, the grandson of the Astronomer Royal by his only child, Margaret, is also known to have made a name for himself in science and technology during the late 1800s. Nevil Story Maskelyne was a professor of mineralogy at Oxford and one of the pioneers of early photography (alongside his wife Thereza), as well as a Member of Parliament.

More details about the man himself will no doubt emerge from Becky's symposium on Nevil Maskelyne - the astronomer and not the magician -- taking place on Saturday 15 October 2011. Watch this space!

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Man breaks into car to steal burger and strips naked after being confronted

By: Chan Yuan

A man was arrested on a charge of theft after allegedly breaking into a car to steal a burger before stripping naked, police in Australia said.

Derby police said that the man, who was not identified, was hungry and spotted a Hungry Jack's Whopper burger in a truck.

The suspect broke into the car and took the burger.

The owner of the vehicle quickly confronted the suspect as his friend brought him the burger from a store located 1,000 miles away.

However, the suspect took off all his clothes and ran away. The victim called the police, who quickly arrested the naked man.

However, there was no sign of the burger. The suspect was charged with disorderly conduct and theft. "A naked man was arrested for going through someone's car. It's hot up here but that's no excuse," police wrote on Twitter.

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Man buried retirement cash, only to have it eaten by worms

/ David Pescovitz / 10:07 am Mon Nov 30, 2015
10:07 am Mon

boingboing.net

Fisherman who distrusted banks buried his life savings. When he dug it up, he got quite a surprise.



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Five years ago, Poor Wu Chen, 67, a fisher in Deyang, China, buried his life savings, about US\$5,500. When he recently dug it up, he discovered that the plastic bag had deteriorated and worms and insects had eaten through much of his cash.

Fortunately, according to Yahoo! News, "his local bank - which he didn't trust to hold his savings in the first place - has come to the rescue, swapping the notes that are in good enough condition for fresh ones,"

totaling a little more than half of Chen's money.



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Man Caught Trying To Have Sex With Campervan

huffingtonpost.com

"It's not normal behavior at all."

A naked man was busted trying to have sex with the tow bar of a camper van.

He tried to lower himself onto the metal tow ball of the vehicle on a busy, well-lit street in Cornwall, southwest England, at 1:30 a.m. one night last week, reports the Cornish Guardian.

Jackie Walker said her 15-year-old granddaughter was staying at her home in the seaside resort of Newquay when she spotted the man from a bedroom window, according to the Plymouth Herald.

"She came in my room crying because she'd heard a noise, and said a man came running out [into the street] with something up his jumper," Walker, 66, told the Cornish Guardian.

"When we got to the upstairs window he was totally naked, trying to sit on the tow bar of a camper van. It was disgusting. She's 15," she added.

The retired grandma of five called police. Officers found the man nearby. He received a formal warning as it was his first offense, according to The Sun.

Walker and her daughter had been left "traumatized" by the incident, she told the Cornish Guardian.

"It's not normal behavior at all. I don't know what's up with the bloke," she added.

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November 25, 2015 4:58 PM

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (AP) — Authorities say a man bringing in his trash can from the street found a human skull in the front yard of his home and called police.

Investigators also found several bones along the road not far from the skull, Bakersfield Police Department Sgt. Gary Carruesco said Wednesday.

The skeletal remains first discovered Monday all appear to be from the same person, Carruesco said.

The Kern County Coroner's Office is trying to identify the remains. The coroner is also working to determine the cause of death and how long ago the person died.

- BlindBoysDontLie

It's Bakersfield. This shit happens surprisingly often.

- Atilla 1 hour ago

The garbage collectors were very untidy on that street. Several years ago, a dog brought a skull to his Laguna Hills, CA home. Owner calls police, Police call UCLA Anthropology lab - turns out it is a 400,000 year old skull of a Native American, washed out of his grave by heavy rains.

- Chi 1 day ago

Great news reporting. I wouldnt have been able to cope with myself if I never received this bit of news.

- Ron P 1 day ago

I think there was some skulduggery there.

- Snowball_InHawaii 1 day ago

Shouldn't be too difficult to find out who they belong to. Should be easy to notice a person who is missing their skull and a few bones.

- bnsgqdf 1 day ago

Bad neighborhood.

- Elyse Rose 2 days ago

That is the best thing to do... is Halloween over?

- Ann 2 days ago

This just in the cause of death has been determined. The person stopped breathing ! ;)

- Snarkysaurus 3 days ago

He better watch out. Somebody is trying to send him a message.

- Daniel 3 days ago

Has anyone checked the local high school or colleges to see if there is a missing skeleton from anatomy class? Maybe missing from a tittle before Halloween?

- Don Bieffle 3 days ago

WOW, that drought is REALLY drying stuff up fast out there

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Man marries pizza pie because he is in love with it and it will never betray him



DiamondGeezer.com @ADiamondGeezer Nov 25
"Russian man 'marries' a pizza because love between humans is 'too complicated'"

By: Feng Qian

A man in Russia, made a statement about his love for pizza by marrying a pie at a pizzeria.

The 22-year-old man of Tomsk, who was not identified, revealed that since his friends always complain about their partners, he decided to take a different path.

The pizza lover was fed up being lonely and decided to marry.

The man said that since he loves pizza and he never had a bad experience with it, he decided to marry a pie. The man held a wedding ceremony at a small pizzeria near his home.

Employees at the shop crafted a specialized marriage certificate for the man and his bride. The man was dressed in his best suit while the bride was wearing a pretty veil on the pizza box.

It is unknown how the man consummated the marriage.

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Man stole brains from former insane asylum and put them on eBay

Wednesday 25 November 2015 Last modified on Wednesday 25 November 2015

theguardian.com

Bloody fingerprint and suspicious buyer led police to David Charles, 23, who took human tissue including brains in jars from Indiana medical museum



David Charles stole brain specimens and other human tissue, some of which he put on eBay. Photograph: Tony Latham/Getty Images

A 23-year-old Indiana man has pleaded guilty to breaking into a medical museum and stealing preserved human brains that he then sold online.

David Charles, of Indianapolis, pleaded guilty to six charges including receiving stolen property and burglary in a Marion county court. Magistrate Amy Barbar sentenced him to one year of home detention and two years of probation, county prosecutor spokesman Anthony Deer said.

Charles on multiple occasions broke into the Indiana Medical History Museum to steal jars of brains and other human tissue, according to the Marion county

prosecutor's office.

The museum is a former hospital for the insane founded in 1848 and later converted into a museum with an autopsy room and anatomical museum that displays preserved specimens, mostly brains, organised by pathology.

Charles was arrested in December 2013 after a San Diego man who bought six jars of brain material for \$600 on eBay alerted police, according to court documents. Many of the items Charles sold were recovered when the San Diego man matched the items he bought to those stolen from the museum based on research he did online, according to court documents.

Investigators were able to identify Charles partly because he left behind in the museum a piece of paper with his bloody fingerprint on it, according to court documents. They recovered 80 jars of human tissue, according to court documents.

Charles, who was ordered to stay away from the museum, also stole an EKG machine, about 10 scopes, a baby scale and other miscellaneous historical items from the museum, Deer said.

Charles must also earn a high school diploma or general educational development certificate under the sentencing agreement, Deer said.

comments (75)



• vr13vr
7m ago

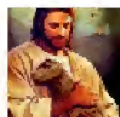
How could he be charged with receiving stolen property if he was the one stealing it?
Did the prosecutor's brain also get stolen?



• kejovi
7m ago

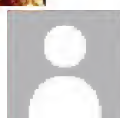
Cool, what else ya got for sale?

• mookamooka



18m ago

A.B. Normal



• nofatebutwhatyoumake mookamooka

7m ago

Damn! You beat me to it....Abby someone.



• Isanybodyouthere

30m ago

In other news Ben Carson has been arrested for inserting insane brain tissue into Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio, Paul Rand, Mike Huckabee, and all the GOP candidates. Said he, "I've been blessed with the same tissue for years and it made me realize the pyramids were granaries. Why should I deny others their delusions?"



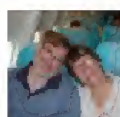
• Miles Long

38m ago

Yep! Right across the border from my home town, Chicago.

See, that Time Zone thing is at work here: when it's Noon in Chicago, it's 1951 in Indiana.

Miles "Tick, Tock" Long



• R. Ben Madison

48m ago

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0265870/>

They Saved Hitler's Brain -- not one of the great cinematic classics of all time.



• SuperHeroic

1h ago

brains...



• stuartMilan

1h ago

gotta love those Yanks



• aishaat9

1h ago

better locks needed



• Isanybodyouthere

1h ago

It was lobe at first sight. And he was up frontal about it.



• Rolf Nilsson

1h ago

So great to have David with us.



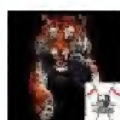
• ChoccaMocha
1h ago

He wasn't sent to prison so at least he avoided a (brain) cell...



• theanonymouscat
1h ago

He has given new meaning to the phrase 'Brain Drain'!!



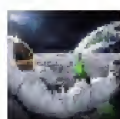
• Stolea
1h ago

I can think of quite a few politicians who could do with a brain transfer. Their existing brains would fit nicely in with a collection of brains from the insane.



• Gazhopper
1h ago

Part of his sentencing agreement is to get a basic education?.. Only in America..



• cccoooper Gazhopper
29m ago

That's a fantastic idea ! . . . It should happen everywhere.



• cnewq5
2h ago
1 2

Can a brain on eBay know it's a brain on eBay? Discuss.



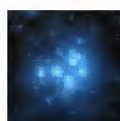
• PhoneyHabit
2h ago

So that's where Trump got his!



• ID951884
2h ago

Damien Hirst, we know it's really you, and it's still not art whatever your dealers and bank manager say.



• ThePleiades ID951884
2h ago

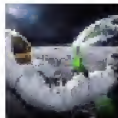
I spit my beer out, because I was laughing so hard at your comment!!!!



• notonlybutalso
2h ago

I have so many questions... not the least being, why on earth would getting a diploma be part of the sentence, and what happens if he doesn't?

• cccoooper notonlybutalso
27m ago



Perhaps if he gets a diploma he might be able to find meaningful employment and won't be out stealing brains . . . duh



• JoeUsual
2h ago

Who buys body parts from Ebay!!



• notonlybutalso JoeUsual
2h ago

...and then calls the police!



• H Hiwet JoeUsual
2h ago

Damien Hirst



• hairhorn JoeUsual
2h ago

Kidney listings used to be so common on eBay that you would sometimes see items with titles like "new stereo speakers - NOT A KIDNEY"



• NucMed
3h ago

Abby something ... Abby Normal?



• ActualGraunReader NucMed
2h ago

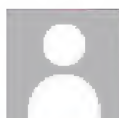
OK, so I make that joke and it gets modded, but you get away with it. What gives?



• NucMed ActualGraunReader
1h ago

"... but you get away with it ..."

Ah, but I'm a bona fide quack ...



• LeCochon
3h ago

Very cool



• noelbird
3h ago

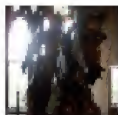
Did he ever find the one that once belonged to George W Bush?



• EarthyByNature noelbird
3h ago

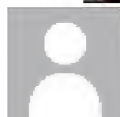
There was one?

• AtraHasis noelbird



2h ago

That would require a very keen eye indeed.



• QUENTINOATMEAL888

3h ago

I note Owen didn't get his back.



• overhere2000

3h ago

Did he get the one marked 'Abby Normal'?

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Man who was caught having sex with donkey tells court it was his wife

By: Wayne Morin

A man was arrested on a charge of bestiality after he was caught having sex with a donkey on his neighbor's property, police in Zimbabwe said.

Now, 24-year-old Munyaradzi Chidhani of Mwenezi, has been sentenced to perform 280 hours of community service after pleading guilty to bestiality.

According to the police investigation, on Sunday, Chidhani found a donkey grazing in his neighbor's field and decided to have sex with it.

He tied a rope around its neck before attaching the other side to a nearby tree. The court heard that Chidhani became intimate with the animal.

The neighbor identified as Benjamin Sendeke, came out of his home to check on his animals and found Chidhani having sex with his donkey.

When Chidhani saw Sendeke, he tried to escape. Sendeke chased after him, caught him and dragged him to the police station.

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Mardipäev and soul time in Estonia

wordpress.com

offeringstone

Mardipäev and soul time in Estonia

Nov9by offeringstone

When I was a kid, I asked my mother whether she dressed up in costumes and went trick-or-treating as a girl in Estonia. She told me – to my horror – that there was no such thing as Halloween when she was growing up.

Instead Estonian kids rubbed soot on their faces or put on a bedsheet and went knocking on a few neighbors' doors on *mardipäev* (Martin's day), though it was not widely celebrated like American Halloween.

Today, November 10, is mardipäev in Estonia.

Originally celebrated on November 11, it honors St. Martin of Tours and is celebrated in many parts of Europe. In Estonia it was a relic from the time when Estonians were reluctant Catholics, forcibly Christianized in the 13th Century. Some time after the Protestant Reformation, however, the Estonians cleverly got back at the Roman Church by switching the date to November 10, Martin Luther's birthday, and honoring Luther instead.

Mother didn't get into the saints and Martin Luther business, and I didn't care about it anyway. What I wanted to know was the burning question: did they get *candy*?

The horror: no candy

Of course they didn't get candy. The poor deprived Estonian kids of the 1920s and 1930s might have gotten an apple or a few nuts from a homeowner, but certainly nothing like the Tootsie Rolls, candy corn, sticky homemade popcorn balls, candy apples, Snickers bars, lollipops, Hershey bars and other goodies that my brother and I hauled home in pillowcases after a hard evening ringing doorbells.

On trick-or-treat nights we usually brought along decorated school milk cartons to collect coins for UNICEF, and turned those in to our grade school teachers the next day. Our costumes were improvised, simple and homemade. Boys often wore cowboy hats and carried their toy six-shooters. Girls frequently dressed as nurses or princesses. Some moms (almost nobody's mother worked outside the home in the early 1960s) sewed or helped make their kids' outfits.

I felt great pity for my mother and her school friends, deprived of the opportunity to devour vast quantities of candy once a year. They also missed out on the joys of Goosey Night, October 30, which is when kids in our part of North Jersey put on dark clothing and ran around ringing people's doorbells to annoy them, or writing on car windows with soap. I presume this was intended as a warning for homeowners to stock up on candy or risk additional tricks the following night.

What on earth did they do for fun back in my mother's childhood? I couldn't begin to imagine.

Souls' time – the time of the ancestors

According to various students of Estonian folklore, Martin's day was part of a longer interval known as *hingede aeg*, soul's time, when the spirits of our ancestors and departed loved ones are near us. Some say this period began with *mihkripäev*, St. Michael's Day, September 29, and concluded with *kadripäev*, St. Catherine's day, November 25, or even on Christmas Eve. Others believe the time of souls started at *hingede päev*, All Souls' Day, November 2, and ended on mardipäev, November 10. (Let me note here

that Estonians don't capitalize the first letters of many words that we would capitalize in English. They also don't use the word saint in mentioning a saint or saint's day. Instead, it's mihkel's day, kadri's day, martin's day and so on.)

Soul time is that bleak part of year when the growing season's done, the leaves have fallen, the nights have grown long and dark and winter is on the doorstep. Contemporary wiccans and pagans in America call this the time when the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead grows thin, and the beloved dead walk among us.

In many cultures around the world, this is a special time to remember the departed. In Mexico, November 2 is known as *Día de los Muertos*, the Day of the Dead, when families create altars and deck them with colorful flowers, candles and skull shapes made from sugar. They picnic in cemeteries, bringing the favorite foods of those they honor and love.

In Estonia, the departed are remembered throughout souls' time rather than concentrated in a single day, according to historian Lauri Vahtre's "*Maarahva Tähtraamat*", published in 1991. This little pamphlet describes the important days of the calendar year as observed by the *maarahvas* — the people of the land. Once *maarahvas* was what Estonians called themselves, but now it seems to include an element of paganism. *Tähtraamat* literally means importance-book and is a sort of calendar/almanac. The first such calendar book written in the Estonian language was called "*Eesti-Ma Rahwa Kalender*", published in Tallinn in 1720. The title means Estonia-Land Folk Calendar. It was an almanac noting feast days, the length of day and night, moon phases, eclipses, and best days for planting, harvesting and undertaking other farm work. Here's a link (in Estonian) to more information about *tähtraamats* from the Saaremaa Museum. <http://www.saartehaal.ee/2013/02/25/tahtraamat-labi-kahe-sajandi/>

Ancestor worship

Vahtre explains that the traditions of mardipäev and souls' time developed from ancient pagan traditions of ancestor worship. All Souls' Day, she writes, originated in 998 C.E. at the Benedictine monastery in Cluny, France and was initially only celebrated by the Benedictines. But because the annual autumnal remembrance of ancestors was widely practiced in much of Europe, the Catholic church turned that tradition into a Christian holiday.

All Saints' Day, the church holiday preceding All Souls' Day, is virtually unknown in Estonia. But the Tallinn city archives show that All Souls' was observed as far back as the 14th and 15th centuries, when it was regarded as an observance strictly for city-dwellers. The country folk, who marked the longer period called souls' time, held specific rituals either on souls' day or Thursdays during souls' time. Thursday was regarded as the holy day of the week by pagan Estonians, but whether this tradition stemmed from the Taara religious cult, analogous to Scandinavian Thor worship, I do not know. Thursday is, naturally, Thor's Day.

Fire up the saun, the ancestors are coming

The most important way to honor the ancestors was to fire up the *saun* (the Estonian word for sauna) and set out special foods for them, either in the saun or the house, sometimes beneath a sacred tree. The head man and woman of the household named their forebears one at a time and invited them to the feast. In return, the ancestors were asked to protect the fields and herds. At the end of souls' time, the ancestors were thanked and wished well on their journey back.

The foods most often served to the ancestors were barley porridge, boiled meat and broth, beans and peas, writes Kristi Salve in an article for the Estonian website Folklore. Link: <http://www.folklore.ee/ri/pubte/ee/sator/sator2/Moningaid.html>

Beans and peas were also traditionally served at wakes and funerals.

Interestingly, the ancient Romans and Etruscans believed that beans contained the souls of the dead. The Romans used beans and peas to invoke the *manes*, benevolent spirits of the dead, during *Parentalia*, a festival honoring ancestors held February 13-21. One wonders whether there is some connection between this tradition and the Estonian custom of offering legumes to the ancestors at souls' time.

Traditionally, joking, laughing, shouting, noise and noisy work like tree-cutting were banned during souls' time, as was spinning, according to an article edited by Mariann Joonas in last week's Telegram online newspaper. Link: <http://www.telegram.ee/vaimsus/hingedepaevast-ja-hingedeajast>

In the Middle Ages, children went from house to house, singing and begging for soul-cakes. A prayer was said for the benefit of the ancestors in exchange for each small cake. This soul-cake custom still exists in the British isles and other places, Joonas writes. In the 19th and 20th centuries, children in the Mulgi region of Estonia dressed in white and went from door to door, though not specifically begging. Nevertheless, they were given cakes, nuts, beans and peas in memory of departed ancestors.

Hing, the Estonian word for soul, also means breath. The ancestors of the Estonian and Finnish people believed that souls existed not just in humans, but in animals and in all the rest of creation. They believed that the soul, or a portion of it, could leave the body during sleep, sickness or unconsciousness, visibly or invisibly, sometimes as a soul-creature such as a bee or butterfly. At the time of death, the *hing* might enter a new person, animal or bird, go somewhere else, or remain close to its former home, according to Joonas's article.

And so I conclude by wishing blessings to you and your ancestors at this souls' time.

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Mari Lwyd - The Zombie Christmas Horse

November 9, 2013

wordpress.com

A Scary Little Christmas



Image

No Christmas tradition bears more resemblance to Halloween than that of the Welsh celebration of Mari Lwyd. There are costumes, trick or treating and a macabre skeleton mare that has risen from the dead and wanders the streets with her attendants with one goal in mind – to get into *your* house. To keep them out, you must engage in a battle of wits...*in rhyme* no less.

An ancient practice, Mari Lwyd or Grey Mare/Holy Mary is typically celebrated on New Year's Eve. Since these ancient times, people have celebrated festivals of light – signifying rebirth and hope in times of darkness. In the festival of Mari Lwyd, we have the rebirth of a dead horse. A horse skull is affixed to a pole with a white cloth to hide the puppeteer. Mari

Lwyd is sometimes decorated with festive ribbons and bells or winter greens and accompanied by costumed, wassailing revelers, who are representative of the dead who have risen to remind the living of their existence.



Image

Mari Lwyd and her group, knock on doors asking, in song, to be let in. The song is sung in Welsh and is pretty much the same with a few variations. You can listen to it here:<http://www.omniglot.com/soundfiles/songs/yfarilwyd.mp3>

Once the traditional opening verses are sung, Mari Lwyd and company are answered by those inside with challenges and insults. A battle of wits known as a *pwnco* ensues, where riddles, challenges and insults must be exchanged in rhyme. If Mari's party wins the *pwnco*, which can be as long as the creativity of the two parties endures, the Mari party enters with another song and is given drinks and treats.

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3 DECEMBER 2015

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201512031763.html>

Ethiopia: School Closed After Mysterious Mass Collapse of Students in Chanco Town

Chanco Elementary School, located in Finfinne surrounding, Oromiya Region Special Zone, Sululta Woreda, Chanco town, remains closed since yesterday after nearly 200 students experienced sudden (and so far mysterious) collapse yesterday afternoon.

Pictures of young and unconscious students being carried away from the school compound yesterday afternoon found its way to the social media; one particular picture of an unconscious young girl sent a shockwave through social media activists who are trying to bring the plight of unarmed Oromo students protesting the Addis Abeba Master Plan but are met with excessive police crackdown.

It was widely reported on Facebook and Twitter that the students in Chanco town were also suffering from police crackdown as was the case in several cities in the Oromiya regional state for the last two weeks.

However, in an interview with this magazine, the school's Deputy Principal Asnakech Wodajo said that due reasons that are unknown so far students started collapsing in the compound around 2:30 PM. "First about ten students collapsed and we took them out of their classrooms," says Asnakech. "Then a lot more students who were outside watching started collapsing as well."

The collapsed students were taken to St. Pawlos Hospital in the capital. According to the Deputy Principal, among those who collapsed was a teacher. The students were discharged from the hospital and returned home after receiving mainly "counseling and psychological treatments," according to Asnakech.

As Ashenafi Degifie, a father, whose nine old daughter attends the school recounts the events of the afternoon to Addis Standard, initially a lot of people in the town had assumed there was some sort of violence that had broken out in or around the school. "So I hurriedly drove to the school. And when I arrived there, I saw lots of kids falling. So I took my daughter and eight other kids to Pawlos [hospital]."

Commander Jemal of the local police force maintains that the police were instrumental in helping the students go to the hospital. "We haven't got the report from the hospital yet. As a result we cannot ascertain what has happened. But there was no violence of any kind," he told Addis Standard.

The commander estimates the collapsed students to be between the ages of nine and fifteen.

The town's administration has called a meeting of the parents this afternoon to discuss the issue, according to the Mayor Defere Sime. He says that his administration will investigate "this unprecedented occurrence."

Chanco elementary school has more than 1000 students.

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Mass Grave Reveals Ottoman Soldiers Fought To The Death In 16th Century Romania - Forbes

forbes.com

Kristina Killgrove

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

On November 13, 1594, Michael the Brave summoned his subjects in the client state of Wallachia to rise up against the Ottoman Empire. As part of a series of land wars between the Ottoman Empire and various powers in Europe, Michael led his troops to conquer several castles along the Danube River and forts deep within Ottoman territory, turning back just miles from the Ottoman capital at Constantinople. But while Michael was away fighting, the men who lent him money to fund his bid to be prince were killed in the Wallachian capital of Bucharest (Romania). Archaeologists believe they may have found these historic figures in a mass grave discovered in Bucharest's University Square, and their bones reveal a very violent death.

During an excavation of the Saint Sava church cemetery, 688 graves dating to the 16th-19th centuries were uncovered. Not far from the consecrated ground, though, archaeologists found three skeletons of people who had been tossed unceremoniously into the bottom of a circular pit. Animal bones, bricks, pottery fragments, and other debris had then been heaped on top of them to fill the pit. The inclusion of all this trash was fortuitous for the archaeologists, though, because the artifacts along with carbon dating of the bones allowed them to date the mass grave to the end of the 16th or early 17th century.



Three skeletons commingled in a pit excavated at Bucharest's University Square. Skeleton 1's head is at top left; Skeleton 2's head is at bottom right; and Skeleton 3's head is in the middle. (Photo used with kind permission of M. Constantinescu.)

Mihai Constantinescu and colleagues carefully disentangled the jumbled remains and pored over the bones looking for clues about who they were and how they died. Writing in the *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology*, they note that all three skeletons were male, and young to middle-age adults. The men all had poor dental health as well as early evidence of osteoarthritis throughout their bodies. Based on muscle attachment sites on bone, they were also engaging in similar repetitive activities: lifting, throwing, moving heavy objects, walking long distances, and sitting in a crouched position. It is highly likely these men shared an occupation that required them to perform the same activities over and over again.

But the injuries the archaeologists found—both those that had healed and those inflicted at death—are shockingly numerous and gruesome. At some point in his life, Skeleton 1 fractured his collarbone, ribs, left wrist, kneecap, hip, lumbar spine, nose, and right middle toes. Skeleton 2 appears to have taken

an arrow to the back, with a penetrating fracture in his left shoulder blade, and had injured both knees. Surprisingly, Skeleton 3 was unscathed, but possibly because he was a bit younger than the other two men.



Skeleton 2, lesion 13: sixth right rib with the arrowhead that produced the injury. (Photo used with kind permission of M. Constantinescu.)

Two dozen more injuries were found on the three bodies, but these were inflicted around the time of death. While Skeletons 1 and 3 had just a few injuries, Skeleton 2 suffered 18 wounds before he died. Most of the wounds were inflicted on these men's heads by an attack from the front, and most injuries were caused by sharp objects like swords and arrows.

There was a musket ball lodged in the neck vertebrae of Skeleton 2, in addition to an arrowhead still stuck in a rib, a hacking wound that shattered the facial skeleton, and indication on the vertebrae that someone attempted to behead him.



Skeleton 2, lesion 12: fourth cervical vertebra with the musket ball that produced the injury (Photo used with kind permission of M. Constantinescu).

Skeleton 3 also showed evidence of beheading with a blade wound—possibly from a broadsword—through a neck vertebra. Skeleton 1 suffered a massive cranial fracture, likely caused by a mace. Since soldiers at that time could only physically carry and use a musket, a bow, or a mace, and not a combination of those,

this means that at least three different individuals set upon this group of men.

The exact names of these men are unknown, but Constantinescu and colleagues think they were either military commanders or janissaries (elite Ottoman infantry soldiers), quite possibly the very ones who had lent Michael the Brave money so that he could rule Wallachia. If they were Romanians, “they would have been buried in a cemetery by the locals,” they write. Based on the time period, the injuries inflicted, and the location of the burial, they conclude that “the tensions caused by the creditors on the princely court of Michael the Brave might have contributed to the excessive violence and to the lack of interest for their remains.”



Skeleton 3, lesion 2: blade wound on the fourth cervical vertebra. The horizontal slice through the vertebral body (top of image) is evidence of sharp trauma. (Photo used with kind permission of M. Constantinescu.)

Did Michael the Brave's subjects violently attack the Ottomans in their midst while he was out fighting the Long Turkish War? It is impossible to answer this question definitively, but Constantinescu and colleagues' work on this mystery grave demonstrates how putting together historical records, military paraphernalia, and human bones can lead us closer to a solution.

(@DrKillgrove) or like her Facebook page Powered by Osteons.

Kristina Killgrove is a bioarchaeologist at the University of West Florida. For more osteology news, follow her on Twitter

The Empire that was always Decaying: The Carolingians (800-888)

Mayke de Jong*

This paper examines the potency of the concept of ›empire‹ in Carolingian history, arguing against the still recent trend in medieval studies of seeing the Carolingian empire as having been in a constant state of decay. An initial historiographical overview of medievalist's perceptions of ›empire‹ over the past century is followed by a discussion of how Carolingian authors themselves constructed, perceived and were influenced by notions of ›empire‹. Biblical scholars like Hraban Maur initiated an authoritative discourse on imperium, which in turn, after the 840s, heavily influenced later authors, perhaps most interestingly Paschasius Radbertus in his *Epitaphium Arsenii*. While the writings of these authors who looked back at Louis's reign have often been interpreted as revealing a decline of imperial ideals, they must rather be seen as testifying to a long-lasting concern for a universal Carolingian empire.

Keywords: Carolingian empire; Historiography; imperium; Louis the Pious; Staatlichkeit.

According to most textbooks, the first Western empire to succeed its late Roman predecessor suddenly burst upon the scene, on Christmas Day 800 in Rome, when Pope Leo III turned Charles, King of the Franks and Lombards, and *patricius* (protector) of the Romans, into an *imperator augustus*. Few events have been debated so much *ad nauseam* by modern historians as this so-called imperial coronation of 800, which was probably not at all a coronation; contemporary sources contradict each other as to what happened on that Christmas Day in St. Peter's church.¹ Charlemagne's biographer Einhard claimed that the vigorous Frankish king »would not have entered the church that day, even though it was a great feast day, if he had known in advance of the pope's plan«. This became the basis for a grand narrative that survived well into the late twentieth century: that this great Germanic warrior had never wished to become emperor, but was tricked into it by a devious pope with his own agenda. Without necessarily admiring Germanicness, historians still tend to distinguish between a Frankish and ›Rome-free‹ conception of empire and a papal version thereof.² Furthermore, the prevailing consensus has been that the imperial title was something like a cherry on Charlemagne's already plentiful cake: there is not a possibility he became a different ruler after 800. All things considered, the great Charles could have done very well without this sudden intervention by Rome's bishop.

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1 Nelson, Why Are There so Many Different Accounts; Schieffer, Neues von der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen. Still authoritative: Classen, *Karl der Große*.

2 Nelson, Kingship and Empire, 70, with reference to the distinction first made by Carl Erdmann in 843. Mayr-Harting, Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation. There is a long German tradition of restricting the Carolingian meaning of *Romanum imperium* to Rome and the papal territories. A recent example: Müller-Mertens, *Römisches Reich*. For a pertinent critique, see Sarti, Frankish Romanness and Charlemagne's Empire, forthcoming in *Speculum*, October 2016. I thank the author for giving me a preview of her article.

that was at stake in 830-833, not the ›unity of empire‹ (*Reichseinheit*).⁶¹ In the territorial sense of the word, this empire ended where the correct Christian cult was no longer practiced. Its boundaries were liturgical as well as political: the right kind of baptismal rite determined membership of the political community.⁶² At the very heart of what we call the Carolingian empire was the ruler's protection of a divinely sanctioned *cultus divinus*, and his duty to extend and enforce this within the boundaries of Christianity under Frankish imperial rule.

This Christian-imperial discourse is not very evident during Charlemagne's reign; it only fully emerged under Louis the Pious, and only really came into its own after 840, when according to traditional modern historiography, the decline of empire was already a fact. The ninth-century imperial discourse lent plenty of support to modern grand narratives about the decline of empire, for apart from triumphalist voices it also features dire complaints about the loss of unity and moral purpose that had once existed. The latter are best understood as witnesses to a growing awareness of what a united Christian polity and its leadership should be like, with ideas that were further articulated through the series of dynastic crises that started in the early 830s.

In the narrative sources in question, the expressions *regnum* and *imperium* were often used interchangeably, as is the case in a brief but celebrated reference to the Carolingian empire: the opening sentences to the *Gesta Karoli* written by the monk Notker from St. Gall, sometime between 885 and 887, very shortly before the last emperor's deposition in 888.⁶³ Notker had no idea of what was coming, so his adaptation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2, 36) is unabashedly imperialist, even though he wrote consistently about *regnum*, rather than *imperium*. After having smashed the lead and clay statue that symbolised the previous four world powers, including the Roman Empire, God had created another with the Carolingians at its head. Charlemagne represented ›the golden head of a second and no less remarkable statue‹, a Frankish empire of which the Greeks and Romans were of course greatly envious.⁶⁴ Notker meant the Byzantines, and the inhabitants of the city of Rome; whereas the latter habitually opposed anyone of importance connected to the apostolic see,⁶⁵ Charles was the Defender of the Church of Rome. This text certainly had eschatological overtones,⁶⁶ but it was also very much part of a highly concrete and terrestrial Frankish imperial imagination in which Charlemagne took ›Persian‹ envoys hunting and proved his superiority.⁶⁷ The very fact that the death and the name of the elephant Abul Abbas, the gift of a fellow emperor from the East, were recorded in the *Royal Frankish Annals* of 810, makes it clear that *imperium* was not just an idea connected with the end of times. This was about inter-imperial one-upmanship involving organs and impressive beasts, symbols of the complementary world rule of Franks, Greeks and Persians. The latter referred to the imperial aspect of the caliphate. However, if Muslims from Spain attacked Franks, they were called Saracens.

A less known but equally strident statement of Frankish imperialism comes from Hraban Maur (d. 856), who as abbot of Fulda got into conflict with his monk and one-time child oblate Gottschalk. In 829 the latter had refused to recognise the validity of his oblation ritual, on

61 Patzold, Eine ›loyale Palastrebellion‹.

62 Reimitz, Grenzen und Grenzüberschreitungen.

63 See MacLean, Kingship and Politics, 199-229, with references to older literature.

64 Notker, *Gesta Karoli* I, cc. 1.10, ed. Haefele 1, 12.

65 Notker, *Gesta Karoli* I, c. 26, ed. Haefele, 34-35.

66 Nelson, Kingship and Empire, 72.

67 Notker, *Gesta Karoli* II, c. 8, ed. Haefele, 59.

the grounds that only Frankish witnesses had been present, not Saxon ones. Protesting about this to the Emperor Louis and his entourage, Hraban maintained that the Saxons had been conquered and then converted by the Franks. As newcomers to Christianity, they had no right to reject Frankish witnesses; throughout history, under the Persians as well as the Romans, the conquered *gentes* had obeyed imperial rule. As the successor of Roman *imperium*, Frankish rule deserved a similar respect.⁶⁸ In his prolific exegesis, Hraban wrote about many biblical kings in imperial terms, for they governed many peoples; Queen Esther, likened to Louis's wife, the Empress Judith, was a case in point. Esther's husband, King Ahasveros, was an imperial figure because of his multi-ethnic realm.⁶⁹

This was the Carolingian empire as in ruling a multitude of converted *gentes* drawn into the Frankish/Christian fold, but it could also mean the Saxons were becoming an integral part of the Frankish *populus*, as Einhard expressed it. The terminology remained fluid. Einhard is an interesting witness to empire, precisely because his remark that Charlemagne would never have entered St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Day 800, had he known what would hit him, has so often been invoked as proof of some kind of Frankish ambivalence about the imperial title. Humility was one of the key virtues of late antique Christian emperors, however, and in other respects as well, Einhard's *Vita Karoli* is an eloquent testimony to imperial rule: Charlemagne is portrayed as lending his support to the Christians of the East, including Jerusalem, Alexandria and Carthage.⁷⁰ Not only did he order the codification of the laws of all the nations under his rule, he also had old songs in his mother tongue written down, started on a grammar in his native language and used this to rename the months and the winds; how imperial can one get? Notwithstanding Einhard's consistent use of *regnum Francorum* in his post-800 narrative, his is a portrait of truly imperial greatness.⁷¹

Einhard's brilliant literary experiment, with its subtle use of Suetonius' biography of Augustus should not blind us to the fact that the model empire of the past was not so much ancient pagan Rome, but its late antique and Christian successor that came into existence in 313. This world of Constantine, and above all of Theodosius and Ambrose, provided ideal imperial history to Frankish authors. Given that this was also the age of the Fathers – Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine – upon which Carolingian biblical exegesis was built, this Christian imperial past functioned much like biblical history: as an imagined community that constantly impinged on the present. When it comes to assessing ninth-century complaints about 'decay of empire', it should be kept in mind that these two yardsticks, biblical and late antique-imperial, underpinned all judgements of decline in the more recent Carolingian past, and often were thought more fundamental than contemporary history. The crucial question in political reflection was, where and when did we fall short of these illustrious examples? One defence of Louis's repeated public penances was that he had been 'like Theodosius'; one of his detractors called him Ahab, incapable of mastering his Jezebel/Judith.⁷²

68 Hraban, *Liber de oblatione puerorum*, PL 107, cols. 432A–442C; De Jong, *State of the Church*, 251; Patzold, Hraban, *Gottschalk und der Traktat*.

69 De Jong, *Exegesis for an Empress*.

70 Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c. 27, ed. Holder-Egger, 31.

71 McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, 7–20, with the arguments for an early dating; for a later one, see Patzold, Einhard's *erste Leser*; Ganz, *Einhard's Charlemagne*.

72 De Jong, *Penitential State*, 122–4, 128–30, 229.

This authoritative imperial past did not emerge overnight on Christmas Day 800. The building blocks were there, of course, but erecting the entire edifice took time. The process itself has recently and aptly been summed up under the heading of ›learning empire‹.⁷³ Hence, it is not surprising that an eloquent statement about empire such as Notker's dates from what modern historians deemed to be the very end of the Carolingian *imperium*. The discourse of empire in terms of *ecclesia* was initiated by biblical scholars such as Hraban, and embraced by those who drafted Louis' capitularies and conciliar acts, but it only really took off after this emperor's death in 840 and the ensuing struggle for the empire among his three remaining sons. The battle of Fontenoy in June 841 became a traumatic watershed: many leading Franks died on the battlefield in a way still prevented in 833. By then it was also clear that the three remaining heirs of Louis were not going to rule in unison.⁷⁴ The first references to this lost world, perhaps infused with nostalgia but still very real to the political actors turned authors who had been part of it, date from the 840s and 850s. The Astronomer's *Life of Louis*, a work written by a member of Louis' inner circle shortly after 840 is one example; Nithard's trenchant report on the strife between Louis's sons in 840–843 is another. The latter author was a well-educated lay magnate, a member of the Carolingian family, who wrote at the behest of Louis' son Charles the Bald. Dhuoda's celebrated handbook for her son William in 841 when he joined this king's court should also be mentioned: a central issue in this text, as in Nithard's, is the nature of *fides*, the ideal of true loyalty to God and one's ruler, which was under threat and needed to be reaffirmed.⁷⁵ For the Astronomer and Nithard alike, *imperium* was a key concept, not as a territorial notion but as the joint authority of those participating in imperial rule. Another expression full of meaning used by both these authors was *publicus*: this was the domain of the Carolingian commonwealth, the *res publica*. This was opposed to anything that was *privatus* – the deprived and immoral world of those who pursued their own interests.⁷⁶ Political and personal animosity were behind Nithard's terse and classically-inspired prose, but his is as clear a statement as any about a severely challenged world of Carolingian ›universal empire‹ (*universum imperium*) as he called it.⁷⁷

These are by no means the only narratives produced after Louis's death in 840 that tried to come to terms with the dynastic upheaval during and shortly after this emperor's reign.⁷⁸ The most interesting text, on which I can comment only briefly on here, is the *Epitaphium Arsenii* by Paschasius Radbertus (d. 860).⁷⁹ This monk and one-time abbot of Corbie and one of the most gifted biblical commentators of his day and age, also wrote funeral orations for his illustrious mentors and predecessors, Adalhard and Wala. The former was nicknamed Antony, the latter Arsenius, names chosen by their inner circles at the court and in Corbie from the authoritative past of imperial Christianity. These cousins of Charlemagne became great abbots after an equally illustrious secular career. As in the case of Nithard's *Histories*,

73 Gantner *et al.*, *Resources of the Past*, see the introduction by Walter Pohl. On cultural memory and the construction of a Frankish notion of empire in ninth-century historiography see McKitterick, *History and Memory*.

74 Nelson, *The Search for Peace*.

75 De Jong, *Carolingian Political Discourse*, with reference to other relevant publications (notably by Janet L. Nelson and Régine Le Jan).

76 Depreux, *Nithard et la Res Publica*; Nelson, *Public Histories and Private History* (repr. in Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, 195–237); Airlie, *The World, the Text and the Carolingian*.

77 Nithard, *Historiae*, I, c. 2, ed. Pertz, 3.

78 C.f. Booker, *Past Convictions*, on ninth-century texts as pegs for later narratives of decline.

79 A text on which I am presently finishing a book: *Epitaph for an Era*, to appear with Cambridge University Press.

Radbert's *Epitaphium Arsenii* had a huge impact on modern views of the decline of the Carolingian empire, yet the diffusion of these texts in their own day and age was extremely limited.⁸⁰ These were works written for a restricted and court-connected circle, including rulers. Their authors felt marginalised and protested to those in power, appealing to their peers and invoking the values that all those connected to the Carolingian dynasty still shared, whatever the political turbulence and conflicting loyalties of the present.

In this context of post-Fontenoy soul-searching, conceptions of empire further evolved. With authors such as the Astronomer, Nithard and Radbert, there is sometimes a territorial dimension to *imperium*, but often this concept refers to the imperial exercise of authority, under the aegis of an *imperator*.⁸¹ Radbert consistently called Louis the Pious ›Caesar‹ or ›Augustus‹. The second book of the *Epitaphium* was written two decades after the first, in the mid-850s, and is mostly about the role of Charlemagne's cousin, Abbot Wala of Corbie (nicknamed Arsenius by his monks) in the two rebellions against Louis. Wala's pupil Radbert defended his master strenuously after the latter's death in 836, and he had much to say about Wala's struggle for the unity of the ›entire empire‹, in the sense of the joint imperial rule of Louis and his eldest son Lothar that had been torn apart by conflict.⁸² Lothar had been his father's co-emperor since 817, a truly imperial configuration that had been initiated by Charlemagne in 813, when, one year before his death, he made his only remaining son Louis a co-emperor. In Radbert's discourse, *imperium* and *regnum* are complementary and even overlapping concepts, as transpires from enumeration of Wala's motives for getting involved in the rebellion of 830:

»For there is nobody so insane that he would call it a sin to act with sacred counsel, for fidelity, for the life of Caesar, for the sons and imperial rule (*imperio*), for the salvation of the people and the deliverance of the fatherland, for the justice and laws of the emperors (*augusti*), for the stability and unity of the kingdom (*regnum*), and the concord of peace, for the averting of vices and abominations, because of adultery, which is the worst of these, and because of the abuse of the entire empire (*imperium*).«⁸³

This is just one of many instances in which *regnum* and *imperium* have much more than a purely territorial connotation. Radbert, who had been deposed as Corbie's abbot by the time he penned his polemical second book in the 850s, lamented a world of imperial unity he had lost, but this unity was above all the unanimity of the Carolingian rulers and their leading

80 My most recent publication on the *Epitaphium Arsenii*, with references to older literature, is titled Jeremiah, Job, Terence and Paschasius Radbertus. On the transmission of Nithard's Histories, see Booker, Early Humanist Edition of Nithard. Radbertus' *Epitaphium Arsenii* is only extant in one Corbie manuscript, BN 13909, which may have been corrected by the author himself.

81 See Ernst Tremp's edition of Thegan's *Gesta Hludowici*, and Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, with an excellent index which shows in one glance that Louis was very much an *imperator*, but that the *imperium* of which modern historians were in search, plays a minor part. The same holds true for the *Epitaphium Arsenii*: Louis is always referred to, consistently, *Caesar* or *Augustus*, but *imperium* denotes his rule, shared or not with his sons.

82 Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, II, c. 10, ed. Dümmler, 76: ›Voluit ut unitas et dignitas totius imperii maneret ob defensionem patriae et ecclesiarum liberationem, ob integritatem rerum, et dispensationem facultatum ecclesiarum: nunc autem, ut cernimus, omnia sunt immutata vel perturbata.‹

83 Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, II, c. 11, ed. Dümmler, 78: ›Quia nemo tam insanus mente, qui peccatum dicat agere sancto consilio, pro fide, pro vita Caesaris, pro filiis et imperio, pro salute populi, et salvatione patriae, pro iustitia et legibus Augustorum, pro stabilitate et unitate regni, pacisque concordia, pro depulsionem vitiorum et abominationum, pro adulterio, quod ultimum est, et pro contumelia totius imperii.‹

men, referred to by Radbert as the *senatus* or *senatores*.⁸⁴ Like Nithard's *Histories*, this was a partisan narrative; the second book fiercely defended Wala's good intentions in the uprising of 830, and his fundamental loyalty to his emperor, Louis. Yet behind this recent and traumatic struggle for empire there was another, more important past: the late antique Christian empire. By using transparent aliases for his political protagonists, such as Justinian (Louis), Justina (Judith), Honorius (Lothar) and so on, this author deftly evoked an authoritative imperial past. Implicitly, Wala was likened to Ambrose facing up to Theodosius, but since the great man was a onetime general, but never a priest or bishop, a direct comparison with the bishop of Milan would not have been appropriate. Instead, Wala received the byname ›Arsenius‹, after the tutor to Theodosius' son Honorius who, according to tradition, exchanged the imperial court for a monastic life.⁸⁵ Equally deliberate, Louis was denied the honorific alias of Theodosius, probably as a reaction to other authors who, loyal to the old emperor, compared his public atonement of 822 to Theodosius' exemplary penance in 391.⁸⁶ Instead, in the *Epitaphium* Louis became Justinian I, a ruler with a questionable reputation, both as a supporter of heresy and a despoiler of church property.

Obviously, these aliases were intended for a small audience of insiders who knew their Christian imperial history as well as their biblical past, but this select group did not merely consist of monks of Corbie. The issues raised by Radbert in the *Epitaph's* second book were relevant to all those who had been caught up in the political whirlwinds of the early 830s, and were still debating the meaning of it all two decades later. Clearly the fact that Louis had been an emperor, and that they had served under imperial rule, mattered deeply. By the mid-850s, when Radbert added his second book, his ruler was Charles the Bald, a king (*rex*) who had started well with regard to protecting monasteries such as Corbie, but who had been found wanting in the long run.⁸⁷ The imperial unity of the past had been lost because nobody at the time had listened to Wala's dire warnings, with the result that ›up to the present day, none of the rulers can show the commonwealth the way towards justice‹.⁸⁸ So this text was indeed an ›epitaph for an era‹, yet it is also one of the most articulate statements about what imperial rule should entail. This largely overlapped with the *ecclesia*, but the question was how to keep the two orders within it apart. The secular and the clerical domain should remain distinct, so that they would be able to operate in a complementary mode. Without this distinction, there would be no co-operation under the aegis of a legitimate monarch, who allowed himself to be advised by the likes of Wala, an expert on the way in which imperial rule worked. He had even managed to counter corruption in Italy! This is Rabert's message in his funeral oration for a man who is presented as the epitome of service to the *augusti* of his day and age.

84 Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, II, c. 1, ed. Dümmler, 61: ›Inde ad comitatum rediens, omnia coram augusto et coram cunctis ecclesiarum praesulibus et senatoribus proposuit singillatim diversorum ordinum officia, excrescentibus malis, et ostendit cuncta esse corrupta vel depravata‹.

85 De Jong, *Becoming Jeremiah*.

86 Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 35, ed. Tremp, 406.

87 Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, II, c. 4, ed. Dümmler, 65.

88 Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, II, c. 6, ed. Dümmler, 66.

Conclusion

In modern scholarship, the *Epitaphium Arsenii* has become one of the key witnesses to the view that decline of the Carolingian empire set in with the crisis of Louis' reign; Einhard's *Vita Karoli* served as the peg for another invented tradition, closely associated with the *Kulturkampf* and the late nineteenth century, according to which Charlemagne would have avoided the empire and the ensuing connection with papal Rome, had he known what was coming. Ninth-century narratives and normative texts have offered plenty of footholds for modern historians who saw the decay of empire everywhere, or who deemed the imperial title superfluous to Charlemagne's already successful rule. He was the only Carolingian emperor that continued to have a real impact on European memory. After him it all went downhill, for a very long time. Yet the very sources that once underpinned this gloomy view of Carolingian empire, now support a much more upbeat approach to this phenomenon. Investigating this topic therefore needs to be a dual operation: studying early medieval sources in conjunction with their subsequent layers of modern interpretation.

In this rather impressionist paper I have sketched some of the changes that occurred since 1945, when those who had lived through World War II were understandably not very enthusiastic about ›empire‹ and all that it stood for. Post-war scholarship on the Carolingian period reveals a constant tension between a modernising perspective, which soon becomes anachronistic if pushed to its extremes, and archaisising tendencies that turn the early Middle Ages into an exotic and utterly foreign country. This tension has proven fruitful, provided those involved are aware of it, a tenet that also holds true for research on the Carolingian empire. It is nowadays conducted by a generation that has found a new balance between the modernity and otherness of this period, and no longer has to write about empire in terms of dichotomies: ideal versus reality, or clerical ideology versus aristocratic power. This is a past which does seem like a foreign country at first, but getting to know it is not entirely impossible.

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According to a strong and persistent trend in modern historiography, the ensuing Carolingian empire did not even last a century, and it was in a constant state of decay; almost from the very moment of its inception. Its modest glory is still exclusively associated with Charlemagne, who was the only Carolingian emperor with whom later empire builders deigned to identify with. When the Great Charles died in January 814, and his weak and overly pious son Louis succeeded, things went downhill rapidly. Or did the decay already start when the once vigorous king retired to Aachen after 800, an old emperor unable to keep his unruly daughters in check?³ Certainly decline had well and truly started by 830, when Louis was faced with the first of rebellions, and at the very latest it started after Louis' death in 840 and during the subsequent division of the empire among his remaining sons in 843.⁴ For then onwards, Carolingian imperial history was a muddle of competing members of the dynasty, so difficult to remember that it was something of a relief that the last legitimate emperor, aptly named Charles the Fat, was deposed in 888.⁵

This was the story of the Carolingian empire as I encountered it in the early 1970s as a student of medieval history at Amsterdam University, in the extensive French, English and German bibliographies that we were expected to master. By then, the Germanic conqueror had become a patron of learning, and a champion of the heady dreams of European integration, complete with a European *Karlspreis* that has been awarded in Aachen since 1950.⁶ Otherwise, our interest in the history of Carolingian empire was minimal, for, like all medieval political history in general, it was worlds removed from the *Annales*-inspired cultural history that was *en vogue* in the 1970s. Compared to Montaillou, medieval politics seemed rather dreary and predictable, what with lay aristocrats who were always out to undermine rulers, and bishops and abbots who were not much better; they all belonged to this power-hungry elite that soon managed to wreck the Carolingian empire. In any case, as we learned from Geoffrey Barraclough, an empire was an ideal that had little to do with political reality,⁷ and the latter was hard to get at anyway, for all sources relevant to Carolingian political history had been produced by clerics, and were therefore far removed from the rough and tumble of actual politics.

Admittedly, well into the 1980s this also remained my uninformed view of the matter. I must have transmitted it to students, without realising how much this gloomy perspective on Carolingian politics owed to the still authoritative publications from the late 1940s and 1950s that I had taken on board as a student. In the aftermath of the Second World War, empire and conquest had become tainted and therefore frozen topics, along with the entire migration period and its so-called Germanic tribes.⁸ By the 1970s Dutch students specialising in medieval history were either attracted by the archive-based local or regional history of the later middle ages, or, in the case of early medievalists, in French *histoire des mentalités*. The latter legitimated the transformation of stuffy old church history into an exciting and novel study of early medieval religion, largely inspired by cultural anthropology. It was only much

3 Nelson, *Women at the Court of Charlemagne*.

4 Booker, *Past Convictions*; Gravel, *De la crise du règne de Louis le Pieux*.

5 For a succinct but effective critique of the traditional view of the later Carolingian empire, see McLean, *Kingship and Politics*.

6 Awarded to the euro in 2002, represented by the President of the European Bank, Wim Duisenberg.

7 Barraclough, *Ideal and Reality*.

8 With the notable exception of Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, a book I only came across in the 1990s.

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later, through studying Carolingian monastic ritual, in the mid-1980s, that I was confronted with the importance of monasticism for early medieval state formation; the next step was investigating the interface between early medieval religion and politics, and discovering that political history could be interesting as well as challenging.⁹

Around the same time, British and American historians began to break out of the restrictive framework of the rise of modern national states, showing that although early medieval kingdoms were indeed different, they did work as political communities in their own right, both at the practical and ideological level, and not just as forerunners of France or Germany.¹⁰ In order to rule, kings depended on the consensus and cooperation of their aristocracies, but the reverse also pertained: members of the elite competed for royal favour.¹¹ That Carolingian literacy had a broader base than was hitherto assumed, had profound implications, not just for understanding the participation of lay magnates in government, but also for the realisation that the religiously articulated political discourse had not just been produced by clerics for their own consumption, or as a top-down ecclesiastical ideology to be imposed on a passive laity.¹²

These new approaches first and foremost focused on the Frankish kingdoms and regions, while Carolingian *empire* did not attract much scholarly attention. This tide started to turn around the year 2000. The upsurge of interest, which still continues, has two distinct yet complementary features. First, the predominantly Christian ideology of ›empire‹ is now taken seriously, as a force with an enduring impact outside a restricted clerical elite, and well beyond the later reign of Charlemagne and the early years of Louis. Secondly, ›empire‹, both in the sense of the title and the realm, is considered worth fighting for until the very end of the Carolingian dynasty. Of course the start of a new millennium has nothing to do with this revived interest in Carolingian empire, and all the more with the previous decade, which saw a fundamental shift of perspective with regard to both early medieval state formation and literacy. This opened the way for a reappraisal of the viability of this large-scale polity, also in terms of shared ideas on an imperial order that were not necessarily detached from, or opposed to, ›political reality‹.

In the rest of this contribution, I will elaborate some more on these changed and changing perspectives, without claiming to offer anything like a complete historiographical survey; these comments are written from my own vantage point as a Dutch early medievalist trained in the 1970s. I then turn to the ninth century itself, and to some of the reflections on Carolingian *imperium* and its decay on the part of authors of the second half of that century. At the time, there were indeed voices that expressed feelings of loss and nostalgia for a glorious and peaceful Carolingian past, when *augustus* (either Charlemagne or Louis) still had the realm in hand. These references to an older and orderly imperial world that was lost after the division of 843 have often been cited in modern research as proof of the decline of the empire, but it was precisely during this so-called period of decay, from the 840s onwards, that the most explicit visions of Carolingian *imperium* were expressed, amidst much lament about the dismal present. Division, strife and upheaval formed a powerful impetus to voice hopes and

9 De Jong, *Carolingian Monasticism*.

10 Two examples that influenced my own work: Geary, *Vivre en conflit*; Davies and Fouracre, *Settlement of Disputes*.

11 Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*; Nelson, *Frankish World*. One of the first explorations of this theme: Wood and Sawyer, *Early Medieval Kingship*.

12 McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*; McKitterick, *Uses of Literacy*.

aspirations for the retrieval of a lost world of united imperial rule. Whether these ideals had already been alive for earlier generations experiencing Frankish empire is a moot point, for they were not articulated as clearly as in the period of so-called decay of the Carolingian empire. All we can say is that this discourse of lost imperial unity and grandeur was very much part of the political reality of the second half of the ninth century.

Kingdoms versus empire (1945-2000)

There is no need to explain why after 1945 the Carolingian empire was no longer a popular topic of research – or any empire, for that matter. In the late 1940s the prominent Belgian historian François-Louis Ganshof published some influential articles with revealing titles such as ›Charlemagne's Failure‹, and ›The End of Charlemagne's Reign: A Decomposition‹. These articles were only translated into English in 1971, which helped to secure the long-term impact of these ideas, generated in the immediate aftermath of World War II.¹³ Charlemagne as an imperial success-story definitely went out of favour, as did the Frankish empire as a whole. As Ganshof put it, this had been a ›conception divorced from reality held by empire-minded clerics, who saw in Charles a Roman emperor God had invested with a universal magistracy for the defence and exaltation of faith and Church‹.¹⁴ Despite concerted attempts, especially in capitularies issued in 802, the imperial title gained in 800 added nothing to the usual business of Frankish kingship, and neither did it enhance relations with the papacy.¹⁵ In Ganshof's words, ›the imperial mirage, compounded of the ideas and images brought back from Rome, must have quickly dissipated when it came in contact with realities: all the more rapidly in that the concept of empire was a clerical concept, which Charlemagne himself no doubt never fully grasped‹.¹⁶ His conclusion: this empire was already far along the road towards decomposition when in 814 Louis the Pious succeeded his father.¹⁷

The Belgian historian was less scathing about Louis than his Austrian colleague Heinrich Fichtenau, whose *Das Karolingische Imperium* (1946) painted a bleak picture of this failing ruler towards the end of his reign: ›An emperor without might or resources, a father in conflict with his sons, a pious Christian who heaped guilt on himself whenever he acted and even more so when he let things be‹.¹⁸ Charlemagne had still been able to keep this empire in hand, but under Louis, everyone went back to a self-interested mode, most of all the so-called reformers who had seemingly adopted a monastic agenda but in fact pursued their own. In the English translation of 1957 the main title remained the same, but in fact Fichtenau distanced himself from his original theme of empire and its (im)possibilities: his last three morose chapters on imperial decline under Louis were omitted, as was an elaborate comparison with Byzantium. Instead, much on court culture under Charlemagne was added, while Aachen was no longer compared with Constantinople but discussed in relation to Jerusalem. The entire focus of the book had now shifted to Charlemagne, as a mighty king inspired by biblical models such as David and Solomon.¹⁹

13 Ganshof, *L'échec de Charlemagne*; Ganshof, *Charlemagne's Failure*; Ganshof, *La fin du règne de Charlemagne*.

14 Ganshof, *The Last Period of Charlemagne's Reign*, 240.

15 Ganshof, *The Last Period of Charlemagne's Reign*, 243.

16 Ganshof, *The Last Period of Charlemagne's Reign*, 247.

17 Ganshof, *The Last Period of Charlemagne's Reign*, 250; for Ganshof's relatively benign view of Charlemagne's successor, see his *Louis the Pious Reconsidered*, 179–180.

18 Fichtenau, *Das karolingische Imperium*, 290; somewhat more optimistic: Halphen, *Charlemagne et l'Empire carolingien*, 305: after 840, the empire continued to exist, adapting to new circumstances.

19 Fichtenau, *Carolingian Empire*, transl. Munz.

While the empire moved behind the horizon, interest in Christian kingship and its Old Testament inspiration was clearly on the rise.⁴⁰ This was well received in quite different research communities that tended to operate mostly within a national context as well as separately. In German post-war medieval scholarship the ›new constitutional history‹ (*Neue Verfassungsgeschichte*), a legacy from the 1930s, was still dominant.⁴¹ This meant that royal power was seen entirely as the result of the personal ability of rulers to claim the loyalty of a fickle and greedy aristocracy. Within this *Personenverbandsstaat*, bishops merely represented the ecclesiastical face of aristocratic family interests, and successful kings were successful lords, first and foremost.⁴² Without the charisma and conquests of a Charlemagne, an empire encompassing all of Latin Christianity was no more than an idea in the minds of ambitious clerics. Given the language barrier, I doubt that British historians of the 1970s were all that familiar with this typically German brand of ›othering‹ early medieval politics,⁴³ but through a different route, namely their openness to social anthropology, they became sensitised to the alterity of the distant past as well. Peter Brown, who moved to the United States in 1978, as well as Michael Wallace-Hadrill who remained in Oxford, are influential cases in point: they were both inspired by anthropologists such as Mary Douglas and Max Gluckman, and brought this perspective to their study of, respectively, late antiquity and the early middle ages.⁴⁴ For Wallace-Hadrill and the generation he taught, be it directly or indirectly, it was Frankish kingship that mattered, not the imperial title which, it was agreed, did not affect Charlemagne's running of his vast realm in any significant way.⁴⁵

These two research traditions, German and British, came together in the work of Timothy Reuter, a historian of German-English ancestry, who was familiar with current German ›constitutional‹ historiography as well as with the anthropologically-inspired British work on early medieval social and political history.⁴⁶ In 1985, Reuter published a seminal article with immediate relevance to the theme of the empire, arguing that throughout the dynasty's history, plunder and tribute had been vital elements in the creation and consolidation of Carolingian royal power; this aggressive type of warfare had not been sustained by a general levy, but rather by a gift-economy in which rulers were dependent on the loyalty of the military elite and its war-bands. With the end of Carolingian military expansion, shortly after 800, the lack of booty made it increasingly difficult to raise such armies. The last truly aggressive campaign was Charlemagne's against the Avars (796). Under Louis the Pious, military ex-

40 Ewig, *Zum christlichen Königsgedanken im Mittelalter*; Schramm, *Kaiser, Könige, Päpste* II, 176–341, with various publications from the 1950s on Charlemagne as king and emperor.

41 Schneidmüller, *Von der deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*; Pohl, *Staat und Herrschaft im Frühmittelalter*.

42 See the critical appraisal of this view by Patzold, *Bischöfe als Träger der politischen Ordnung*; Patzold, *Episcopus*.

43 Pohl, *Ursprungserzählungen und Gegenbilder*; Pohl, *Staat und Herrschaft im Frühmittelalter*, 16–27. The obvious exception is Karl Leyser, but his work is much closer to the Anglophone historians inspired by social anthropology than to German traditions of institutional history.

44 Wood, John Michael Wallace-Hadrill; Wood, *Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages*, ch. 15 (›The Emergence of Late Antiquity‹). Wood, *Transformation of Late Antiquity*, to appear in *Networks and Neighbours*.

45 The great exception was the Austrian refugee Walter Ullmann, who became Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge (1949) and professor of Medieval History (1972). In many ways Ullmann was part of a Continental and pre-war generation of historians of ideas, to which Percy Schramm and Ernst Kantorowicz also belonged. His grand vision of the top-down (›hierocratic‹) authority of popes and emperors that supposedly dominated early medieval political structures was politely but effectively undermined by his two most prominent pupils, Janet L. Nelson and Rosamond McKitterick, who trained their own students very differently, respectively at KCL London and Cambridge University.

46 Timothy Reuter died prematurely in 2002. His collected papers have been edited by Nelson, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, including *Plunder and Tribute* and its sequel of 1990, *End of Carolingian Military Expansion*.

peditions had become purely defensive ones. By then, the super-rich Frankish empire had turned into an attractive target for plunder, and ›the very success of Frankish imperialism in the eighth century had led to a shortage of victims who were both conquerable and profitable, which forced the aristocracy to revise its profit-and-loss assessment of warfare.‹²⁷ The only way out was internal expansion, that is, to say, the use of ecclesiastical property. As Reuter argued, most of Ganshof's ›decomposition‹ of the last phase of Charlemagne's reign had in fact been the result of military stagnation. Of course forgiveness and humility of the kind displayed by Louis the Pious became more desirable as resources dried up; the internal crisis of 830 were only a matter of structure and time, not of personalities or ideologies.²⁸

This struck a chord with the mostly Anglophone historians who were exploring the early medieval past as a foreign country,²⁹ but also with the German tradition of the Carolingian realm as *Personenverbandsstaat*. In Germany, also in the 1980s, a fierce debate erupted about ›Staatlichkeit‹: did anything of the sort exist in the Carolingian age? Johannes Fried answered this question in the negative, maintaining that ninth-century Frankish sources showed no sign of transpersonal or abstract concepts of a political community. The only possible exception was the notion of *ecclesia* which did seem to denote the Christian empire, but Fried dismissed this as mere ›clerical thinking‹, far removed from actual politics.³⁰ Hans-Werner Goetz begged to differ, countering that the concept of *regnum* did refer to a territorial unit that existed regardless of personal ties between a ruler and his magnates, but he as well tended to ignore the connection between *ecclesia* and empire, for his case was built on the Carolingian discourse on *regna*.³¹

All parties involved, including the majority outside Germany that remained unaware of the controversy on Carolingian *Staatlichkeit*, could accept Reuter's no-nonsense approach. It posed a welcome challenge to a version of the Carolingian empire that was still very much around in the 1980s: a rather starry-eyed notion of this splendid cultural predecessor of the current European Community, as it had been presented in 1965 during the great exhibitions on Charlemagne in Aachen, and had lived on ever since, especially in the public domain. For Reuter and many others at the time, this was mere ›ideology‹ produced by naïve modern historians and ninth-century clerics alike. Please note the negative connotation that the term *Ideologie* still has in German, and more in general, in a Marxist context. Economic and social structures determined the outlook of the normative sources, not the other way around.

With hindsight, the almost total absence of church and religion in these debates is striking. First and foremost, churchmen were seen as the providers of the ideology of the empire – often called the ›rhetoric of reform‹ but they were outside the hard-nosed world of politics, and if they entered it, it was as the clerical face of a self-interested aristocracy intent on countering royal attempts at centralisation. Reuter's views do raise some serious questions: was Louis the Pious really as adverse to warfare as he has been made out to be, and, more importantly, did royal/imperial control of monastic property not compensate to a large extent for the slower pace of conquest?³² But by the early 1990s, when a big European-funded

27 Reuter, *Plunder and Tribute*, 265–267.

28 Reuter, *Plunder and Tribute*, 265–267.

29 De Jong, *Foreign Past*.

30 Fried, *Karolingischer Herrschaftsverband*; see also Fried, *Gens und regnum*.

31 Goetz, *Regnum*.

32 Objections voiced at a later stage by Halsall, *Warfare and Society*, 91–92; see also McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, 135–6, 288–291.

research programme on the *Transformation of the Roman World* started, Reuter's perspective on empire still prevailed, and, with some exceptions, neither religion nor the Carolingian empire occupied a central place on its agenda.³³ The main themes investigated between 1992 and 1997 were the social and economic transformations between c. 400 and c. 800, and the emergence of post-Roman kingdoms in the West with an ethnically-defined identity: ›Kingdoms of the Empire‹, as the title of one of the publications of the ensuing series called it.³⁴ Above all, this programme enabled a major confrontation between a multitude of national research traditions of which the participants had not been aware of. As it turned out, nationalism was not a thing of the past; i.e. in the early 1990s, the Yugoslav state broke up, and a series of vicious wars followed.³⁵ And this was of course part of the collapse of a contemporary imperial state, the Soviet Union. So, in fact, weren't large empires always bound to decline and fall?

It is significant, I think, that the ›Carolingian‹ volume (c. 700–c. 900) of the *New Cambridge Medieval History*, published in 1995, does not feature ›empire‹ or ›imperium‹ in its general index, nor in any of the chapter titles except in the one on book production.³⁶ All the same, there are signs of change there as well. For example, in Janet Nelson's contribution, which was not on empire but on ›Kingship and Royal Government‹, a topic on which she had just published an important book, *Charles the Bald* (1992), which inspired younger historians to work on later Carolingian rulers and reigns.³⁷ The notion that empire had not fundamentally changed Charlemagne's government remained in place, but plunder and tribute as the sole source of aristocratic loyalty was firmly rejected; royal control of church lands is signalled as an important alternative resource. The Carolingian empire's process of so-called dissolution, Nelson maintained, was also one of resolution and reformation; however, it did not implode.³⁸ The year 1995 also saw the publication of a collection of articles on early medieval immunities and the ways in which these had underpinned, rather than undermined, royal resources.³⁹ Nelson contributed to this, but also Reuter himself, who thereby helped to create a paradigm shift that went straight against his earlier work – surely the mark of a great scholar.

The overall emphasis on the otherness of early medieval societies of the 1980s may have gone overboard a bit, but all things considered, these new approaches to the early medieval political order, inspired by anthropology and social history, provided a much-needed antidote against the anachronistic association of political history with national states or their so-called precursors.⁴⁰ This in turn prepared the ground for a fresh look at the Carolingian empire. Matthew Innes' *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages* (2000) was the first of

33 Wood, Report. The one exception was the group concerned with ›Rituals of Power‹, led by the archaeologist Frans Theuws, which did not think about empire, but certainly focussed on religion and the Carolingian period; see Nelson and Theuws, *Rituals of Power*; and De Jong *et al.*, *Topographies of Power*.

34 See also Hansen and Wickham, *The Long Eighth Century*; Pohl, *Kingdoms of the Empire*; Pohl, *Strategies of Distinction*. The working group with the highest density of Carolingianists in it focussed primarily on political power and the rituals and topographies associated with it: Nelson and Theuws, *Rituals of Power*, and De Jong *et al.*, *Topographies of Power*.

35 Geary, *Myth of Nations*.

36 McKitterick, *New Cambridge Medieval History II*.

37 Nelson, *Charles the Bald*; her translation of the main narrative of the reign of Charles the Bald was equally influential: *Annales Bertiniani*, trans. Nelson, *Annals of St-Bertin*.

38 Nelson, *Kingship and Royal Government*, 383–430, at 394–395; compare her earlier *Kingship and Empire*.

39 Davies and Fouracre, *Property and Power* (see n. 3 above); in a similar vein, Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*.

40 See above, n. 11.

a series of monographs with a clear (and often charter-based) focus on local and regional politics; how did the integration of such regions into political structures created by rulers and their entourages work, and how did kings gain a foothold in distant localities?⁴¹ At the beginning of the new millennium, an Austrian/German-led working group, an offspring of the European *TRW* programme of the 1990s, began to investigate early medieval ›Staatlichkeit‹, a German notion impossible to translate into English or French, as it turned out, but this misunderstanding proved highly productive.⁴² ›Empire‹ was also a point of discussion, especially in relation to *ecclesia* as a comprehensive concept denoting a multi-ethnic polity.⁴³

By the turn of the millennium, Carolingian *imperium* was definitely back on the agenda. That Johannes Fried publicly declared that Charlemagne had engineered his own imperial coronation, rather than having it foisted on him by the pope, was a sure sign that the mood was changing, even in Germany.⁴⁴ In two major syntheses published in 2005, by Chris Wickham and Julia Smith; empire is largely absent;⁴⁵ its return on the scholarly agenda seems to have been the work of a younger generation. Simon MacLean's study of the last Carolingian emperor, Charles the Fat, reveals the extent to which older historiography had gotten stuck in the paradigm of an empire that was always decaying, awaiting the rise of nations; MacLean also shows how important the imperial title was for competing members of the later Carolingian dynasty.⁴⁶ In a similar vein, Eric J. Goldberg entitled his monograph on Louis the German *Struggle for Empire*.⁴⁷ In that same year, Steffen Patzold deconstructed the tenacious idea that in the 830s a clerical *Reichseinheitspartei* had unrealistically persisted in keeping the ideal of empire intact, in the face of very different political realities of a more Germanic kind. For Patzold (and myself, for that matter) churchmen and lay magnates alike shared a religiously articulated sense of ›ministry‹ and service to a public cause embodied by royal and imperial authority; whenever this corporate identity was threatened, the ensuing fissure did not simply run along the time-honoured lay/clerical divide.⁴⁸ My own book on religious/political discourse during the reign of Louis the Pious (2009) assumed the importance of an ›empire as *ecclesia*‹ as a matter of course: by the early ninth century, the Old Testament notion of the Franks as the elect, a people that had replaced the *prior populus*, Israel, was difficult to maintain, and the *ecclesia gentium* offered a suitable alternative model for identification.⁴⁹ But I wish I had shown even more that humility and atonement were typically *imperial* virtues, and the same could be argued for another of Louis' public virtues once thought of as a private weakness, namely clemency.⁵⁰

The Carolingian World, an excellent textbook produced in 2011 by three prominent pupils of McKitterick and Nelson, shows how rapidly thinking on ›empire‹ has changed.⁵¹ It contains an extensive chapter on ›Inventing the Carolingian empire, 800–840‹, which takes

41 Innes, *State and Society*; Innes, *People, Places and Power*.

42 Airlie et al., *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*; Pohl and Wiesner, *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat*.

43 De Jong, *Ecclesia and the Early Medieval Polity*.

44 Fried, Papst Leo III. besucht Karl den Großen; see also Fried, *Karl der Große*.

45 Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*; Smith, *Europe after Rome*.

46 MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*.

47 Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire*.

48 Patzold, Eine ›loyale Palastrebellion‹; a divide also broken down in Wormald and Nelson, *Lay Intellectuals*.

49 De Jong, *Empire as Ecclesia*.

50 De Jong, *Penitential State*.

51 Costambeys et al., *Carolingian World*, 154–222.

into account Reuter's views, but concludes that the cessation of wars of conquest in the early 800 ›catalysed a dramatic shift in this culture which meant the roles of every member of the elite, from the royal family had to be redefined‹. The term empire ›had to be invented in the imaginations and mentalities of its elites‹.⁵² The familiar mantra that the imperial coronation did not radically alter Charlemagne's rule is reiterated, yet the emphasis is on the greater intensity of the ruler's attempts at effective control, from 802 onwards.⁵³ As to its success, the answer is fairly positive and a far cry from Ganshof's theory of decomposition and Reuter's theory of military collapse of the empire. Hard on the heels of this already influential synthesis, in 2012 Martin Gravel published an extensive investigation of how the Carolingian empire really worked, under Charlemagne and Louis, with upbeat conclusions on the effectiveness of communication between these rulers and their elites, both lay and ecclesiastical, central and peripheral. The subtitle speaks for itself: *Réaliser l'empire sous Charlemagne et Louis le Pieux*. Gravel's sources have been known to known to historians since Ganshof wrote about Charlemagne's failure, yet his interpretation of them is entirely different.⁵⁴

New work on the Carolingian empire keeps appearing. Some of it remains focused on its ideological aspects, but without having to apologise for ideals that are clerical and therefore far removed from political reality; the topics recently explored range from a re-examination of the expression *imperium*⁵⁵ and ›empire‹ as a Christian community writ large⁵⁶ to the impact of Carolingian notions of ›empire‹ on later centuries.⁵⁷ At the same time, the practical side of imperial power and authority has become a central concern to the point of moving centre stage.⁵⁸ As I wrote most of this paper in August 2015, Jennifer R. Davis' new book appeared: unfortunately too late for me to take it on board here. But its title speaks volumes: *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire*.⁵⁹

Carolingian empire and decay: some contemporary voices

The overall image we are left with, after two decades of research, is one of a Carolingian world in which rulers and their leading men shared a strong sense of order, and the determination to implement this in the real world. Conflict was as much a regular feature of ninth-century politics as consensus, and it was behind much of the more articulate reflections on the nature and cohesion of the polity. Bishops and abbots were very much part of the governing elite, controlling lands that were essential to the military survival of the state.⁶⁰ According to ninth-century usage, *imperium* did not so much refer to a clearly-defined territorial unit as to the exercise of imperial authority by the senior member(s) of the Carolingian dynasty who bore the title *augustus imperator*. It was the unanimity between Louis and his sons, including his co-emperor Lothar,

52 Costambeys et al., *Carolingian World*, 159–160.

53 Already signalled in Innes, *Charlemagne's Government*.

54 Gravel, *Distances, rencontres, communications*. For some groundbreaking recent work on early medieval literacy, see Brown et al., *Documentary Culture and the Laity*.

55 Van Espelo, *Testimony of Carolingian Rule*; Sarti, *Frankish Romanness* (see above, footnote 2).

56 Patzold, ›Einheit‹ versus ›Fraktionierung‹; Phelan, *Formation of Christian Europe*; Kramer, *Great Expectations*.

57 Latowsky, *Emperor of the World*.

58 Notably Gravel, *Distances, rencontres, communications*, but also Garipzanov, *Symbolic Language of Royal Authority*, with a strong focus on images of empire circulating via coins and other publicly accessible media. And, very recently, Conant, *Louis the Pious*.

59 About to appear with Cambridge University Press.

60 De Jong, *Ecclesia and the Early Medieval Polity*. On the pre-Carolingian period, see Wood, *Entrusting Western Europe to the Church*.

Meet the eyeless man who says he can see (and is probably right)

By Rachel Feltman
January 26

washingtonpost.com

With both eyes lost to cancer when he was just a toddler, you'd expect Daniel Kish to be as blind as a person can get. He's become famous for using a sort of human echolocation to find his way around, but there's more to it than that: According to Kish, his fellow echo-locators, and the scans of their brains, they're *actually seeing*.

Let's step back for a second. What does it mean to see? If you have normal eyesight, you probably think of sight as the ability to take a perfect picture of the world in front of you using your eyes. But that's not how vision works. The sights we "see" are produced inside our own brains. Our eyes are certainly well-designed input devices, giving us sharp, colorful outputs of the world. But what if another part of your body collected the data used to create those inner pictures instead?

On this week's "Invisibilia," NPR's new science podcast, hosts Alix Spiegel and Lulu Miller interview Kish as the ultimate example of triumph over the expectations of others.

You've probably seen videos of Kish: He clicks his tongue against the roof of his mouth and uses the feedback he hears to produce a kind of sonic representation of his world. No one taught him to act like a bat — he's just been doing it since he was a rambunctious, adventurous, totally sightless toddler.

People tend to freak out over Kish's ability to ride a bike without veering off into traffic. It's certainly amazing to watch, but Kish says that the world's amazement with him is what keeps blind people blind.

"I definitely think that most blind people could move around with fluidity and confidence if that were the expectation," Kish told "Invisibilia." "If our culture recognized the capacity of blind people to see, then more blind people would learn to see. It's actually - it's pretty simple and straightforward.

Learning to get around the way Kish does (something he teaches through his organization World Access for the Blind) is tough for adults, but doable. But it's much easier for kids. And once they get there, they experience something that's hard not to call sight.

"I definitely would say that I experience images, that I have images," Kish told NPR. "They are images of spatial character and depth that have a lot of the same qualities that a person who sees would see."

Kish's friend Brian Bushway, who had normal vision until he was a teenager and now uses echolocation, backs this up. By learning the new way of seeing, he said, he went from total blindness to something a lot like his former vision.

"Things are real," Bushway told NPR. "I mean, it's as real as looking at it."

Durham University neuroscientist Lore Thaler tested this notion by watching the brain activity of people like Kish and Brian. She wanted to see what their brains were doing when they listened to the clicks they produced. Their visual cortexes weren't just active -- they reacted much more like a brain "seeing" different objects and objects in motion than like a "blind" brain would.

According to other studies, Miller and Spiegel report, this vision may be something like healthy peripheral vision. You might not be able to recognize the driver in a car that passes while you're looking down at your phone, but that doesn't mean you can't "see" the car.

It's a bit of a mind melting notion, to be sure. But maybe you don't need eyes to see.

You can hear more about Kish on "Invisibilia."

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Mencken's History of the Bathtub

hoaxes.org



On December 28, 1917, the journalist Henry L. Mencken published an article in the New York *Evening Mail* titled "A Neglected Anniversary" (read the full text here). It described the curious history of the bathtub in America, particularly how people, believing bathtubs posed a health risk, were slow to accept them until Millard Fillmore popularized them by installing one in the White House in 1850.

The Article Spreads

After being published in the *Evening Mail*, details from Mencken's article soon began to appear in other publications. Many newspapers printed the following abbreviated version of his history:

The Rise of the Bathtub

The first bathtub in the United States was installed in Cincinnati December 20, 1842, by Adam Thompson. It was made of mahogany and lined with sheet lead. At a Christmas party he exhibited and explained it and four guests later took a plunge. The next day the Cincinnati paper devoted many columns to the new invention and it gave rise to violent controversy.

Some papers designated it as an epicurian luxury, other called it undemocratic, as it lacked simplicity in its surroundings. Medical authorities attacked it as dangerous to health.

The controversy reached other cities, and in more than one place medical opposition was reflected in legislation. In 1843 the Philadelphia Common Council considered an ordinance prohibiting bathing between November 1 and March 15, and this ordinance failed of passage by but two votes.

During the same year the Legislature of Virginia laid a tax of \$30 a year on all bathtubs that might be set up. In Hartford, Providence, Charleston and Wilmington special and very heavy water rates were laid on persons who had bathtubs. Boston in 1845 made bathing unlawful except on medical advice, but the ordinance was never enforced and in 1862 it was repealed.

President Millard Fillmore gave the bathtub recognition and respectability. While Vice President he visited Cincinnati in 1850 on a stumping tour and inspected the original bathtub and used it. Experiencing no ill effects he became an ardent advocate, and on becoming President he had a tub installed in the White House. The Secretary of War invited bids for the installation. This tub continued to be the one in use until the first Cleveland Administration.

The Joke Succeeds Too Well

Nothing in Mencken's history of the bathtub was true. It was all a joke. Mencken later wrote, "My motive was simply to have some harmless fun in war days."

Mencken said he didn't expect anyone to take his article seriously, but his motives were hardly as innocent as he made them out to be. The article was a deliberate hoax designed to test the gullibility of readers and other journalists. His hoax succeeded beyond his wildest dreams.

H.L. Mencken



Mencken's faux history of the bathtub quickly spread throughout the country. Not only did references to it pop up repeatedly in newspapers, but scholarly histories of public hygiene also cited it, illustrating Lord Balfour's famous quip that, "History does not repeat itself. Historians repeat each other."

Mencken Confesses

After eight years passed, and the faux-history was still circulating, Mencken decided the joke had gone far enough. It was time to reveal what he had done. On May 23, 1926 he wrote a front-page article in the *Chicago Tribune* titled "Melancholy Reflections" in which he exposed his deception. Excerpts from this article follow (read the full text here):

On Dec. 28, 1917, I printed in the New York *Evening Mail*, a paper now extinct, an article purporting to give the history of the bathtub. This article, I may say at once, was a tissue of absurdities, all of them deliberate and most of them obvious...

This article, as I say, was planned as a piece of spoofing to relieve the strain of war days, and I confess that I regarded it, when it came out, with considerable satisfaction. It was reprinted by various great organs of the enlightenment, and after a while the usual letters began to reach me from readers. Then, suddenly, my satisfaction turned to consternation. For these readers, it appeared, all took my idle jocosities with complete seriousness. Some of them, of antiquarian tastes, asked for further light on this or that phase of the subject. Others actually offered me corroboration!

But the worst was to come. Pretty soon I began to encounter my preposterous "facts" in the writings of other men. They began to be used by chiropractors and other such quacks as evidence of the stupidity of medical men. They began to be cited by medical men as proof of the progress of public hygiene. They got into learned journals. They were alluded to on the floor of congress. They crossed the ocean, and were discussed solemnly in England and on the continent. Finally, I began to find them in standard works of reference. Today, I believe, they are accepted as gospel everywhere on earth. To question them becomes as hazardous as to question the Norman invasion...

I recite this history, not because it is singular, but because it is typical. It is out of just such frauds, I believe, that most of the so-called knowledge of humanity flows. What begins as a guess -- or, perhaps, not infrequently, as a downright and deliberate lie -- ends as a fact and is embalmed in the history books. One recalls the gaudy days of 1914-1918. How much that was then devoured by the newspaper readers of the world was actually true? Probably not 1 per cent. Ever since the war ended learned and laborious men have been at work examining and exposing its fictions. But every one of these fictions retains full faith and credit today. To question even the most palpably absurd of them, in most parts of the United States, is to invite denunciation as a bolshevik...

The moral, if any, I leave to psycho-pathologists, if competent ones can be found. All I care to do today is to reiterate, in the most solemn and awful terms, that my history of the bathtub, printed on Dec. 28, 1917, was pure buncombe. If there were any facts in it they got there accidentally and against my design. But today the tale is in the encyclopedias. History, said a great American soothsayer, is bunk.

The Joke Refuses To Die

Mencken's exposé did little to halt the spread of his faux history of the bathtub. In fact, the Boston *Herald*, three weeks after publishing his confession, reprinted details of his fake bathtub history as news. Mencken wrote further articles describing his hoax, such as one published on July 25, 1926, but by now his history had taken on a life of its own and continued to circulate widely as fact. The genie, once let out of the bottle, refused to be put back in.



Illustration of Thompson's bathtub, published in the *Chronicle-Telegram*, November 18, 1935 -- nine years after Mencken's confession.

Curtis MacDougall, writing in 1958, reported finding fifty-five different instances since 1926 of Mencken's bathtub history being presented to audiences as fact. Some of the examples that MacDougall collected included:

October, 1926: *Scribner's* included an article, "Bathtubs, Early Americans," by Fairfax Downey, based almost entirely on Mencken's story.

March 16, 1929: In "Baltimore Day by Day," by Carroll Dulaney, in Mencken's own newspaper, the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, the story is told under the heading, "Painting the Lily."

September 26, 1929: The Paris, France, edition of the *New York Herald* rewrites an article by Ruth Wakeman in the *New York Sun* entitled, "Americans Once Frowned on Bathtubs, Condemning Them for Fancied Hazards."

December 1, 1931: The Tucson, Arizona, *Daily Star* interviews C.R. King, manager of the Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company branch in Tucson, on the imminent birthday of the bathtub. Mr. King, who according to the *Star* "had apparently studied the matter considerably," hands out the same old facts, which are printed under a two-column head, "Bathtub Will Have Birthday in America During December."

April 27, 1933: A United Features Syndicate feature, "How It Began," by Russ Murphy and Ray Nenuskay includes an illustration of Adam Thompson in his first bathtub.

1935: Dr. Hans Zinsser, professor in the Medical School of Harvard University, says on page 285 of his best-selling *Rats, Lice and History*: "The first bathtub didn't reach America, we believe, until about 1840."

November 15, 1935: R.J. Scott's "Scott's Scrapbook," syndicated by the Central Press Association, includes a sketch of a policeman chasing a bather away from his bath, together with the caption: As late as 1842 some American cities prohibited the use of bathtubs."

May 27, 1936: Dr. Shirley W. Wynne, former commissioner of health for New York City, uses the "facts" in a radio address, "What Is Public Health?" over WEA.

February, 1937: The United Press *Red Letter* includes a story from Cambridge, Massachusetts, that Dr. Cecil K. Drinker, dean and professor of physiology at the Harvard School of Public Health, has discovered that his great-great-grandmother, Elizabeth Drinker of Philadelphia, had a bathtub in her home as early as 1803, thus disputing Cincinnati's claim to fame for having the first American bathtub. (The Chicago *Daily News* used the story March 27, 1937.)

September 28, 1938: Hearst's *American Weekly* includes an article, "There's a Lot of History Behind Your Bathtub," by Virginia S. Eiffert, research expert and contributor to *Natural History*, official magazine of the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, and other publications. Miss Eiffert's research has uncovered the old stand-by.

Sept. 20, 1942: Julia Spiegelman retold the entire Adam Thompson tale as fact in an article, "Bathtub's United States Centennial" in the *Baltimore Sun*, Mencken's own newspaper.

April 28, 1951: In this day's issue of *The New Yorker* John Hersey revealed, in a profile on Harry S. Truman, that "the president seemed reluctant to let go of his belief" in the fact that Millard Fillmore introduced the first bathtub into the White House in 1850. President Truman was known to include the spurious facts in the "lecture" he gave visitors to the renovated executive mansion.

Sept. 16, 1952: In a speech in Philadelphia, President Truman told the story to illustrate what great progress has occurred in public health.

The Hoax Continues

Mencken's faux history of the bathtub is one of the most notorious media hoaxes of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, despite being repeatedly debunked, it continues to be repeated as fact to this day.

For instance, as recently as February, 2004, the Washington Post noted in a travel column, "Bet you didn't know that . . . Fillmore was the first president to install a bathtub in the White House." It sheepishly ran a correction a few days later.

The website sniggle.net has cataloged thirty-four other examples of Mencken's bathtub history being offered as fact in recent articles.

The Real History of the Bathtub

Bathing has been a popular practice for thousands of years. The Romans built marble baths complete with lead or bronze pipes. However, modern bathtubs, fitted with plumbing, and installed in houses, were a nineteenth-century innovation. Cast-iron bathtubs began to be sold during the 1880s. By the early 20th century it had become common for houses to have separate bathrooms in which a bathtub was installed. Despite what Mencken claimed, medical authorities did not denounce bathing as unhygienic. Nor were laws passed banning the practice.

Celebrations

In honor of Millard Fillmore's apocryphal adoption of the bathtub, the town of Moravia, New York has held bathtub races down its main street every year since 1975. The races are part of a celebration which it calls Fillmore Days.

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History Medical Hoaxes Newspapers and Magazines Hoaxes of the 1910s Hoaxes by Journalists

Comments

Dr. Shirley Wynne was the father of an uncle of mine. Bummer to see him duped in this hoax too!!!
Posted by Stu in United States on Sun Dec 29, 2013 at 08:57 PM

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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

"The Two-Headed Nightingale" – Millie & Christine McCoy



While researching birth anomalies throughout history I came across an article on conjoined twins Millie and Christine McCoy, who have been well-documented but until this time were unknown to me. The article, "An Amiable Pair" referred to Millie and Christine as a "two-headed freak" and a "freak of nature." (Read this disclaimer about terminology found in the old papers here.) This article mentioned that Millie and Christine, African-Americans who were about 40 in 1898, were very intelligent, able to speak several foreign languages, and were worth around half a million dollars. That was an astounding accumulation of wealth for anyone in 1898, and extremely impressive for the McCoy twins.

Millie and Christine were born in 1851 to slaves of a North Carolina blacksmith. It wouldn't be long before they were ripped from the arms of their parents and sold for the first time in

infancy to a man from South Carolina, where they were put on exhibition for the public due to their unique physical condition. They were treated as a commodity and bought, sold, and even stolen several more times over the years, "displayed" in fairs and museums in the United States as well as in Britain. More about their career, lives, and death can be read [here](#). I found it interesting that after slavery ended, the twins and other family members decided to stay with their former owner, Mr. Smith, with him now acting as the twins' manager.

lend me a dollar to get a drink, will you?" and sauntered off.

THE TWO HEADED MARVEL.

Millie Christine on Private View--
A Wonderful Freak.

A number of invited guests were given a private exhibition of Millie Christine, the two-headed nightingale, at the Windsor hotel last night. At 8 o'clock Millie Christine entered the room accompanied by her manager, Mr. Smith, and after a few remarks seated herself and gave a brief history.

Said one of the heads of Millie Christine: "I was born in North Carolina in 1851, and since that time have been constantly before the public. At eighteen months I was stolen and taken to England and released under habeas corpus proceeding before Justice Rouse. I then came back to America and did not appear for some years, the war preventing. Millie Christine is a mulatto and is of medium stature. There are two heads and arms, growing into one body just below the shoulder blades. There are four lower limbs, however, notwithstanding the fact that there is

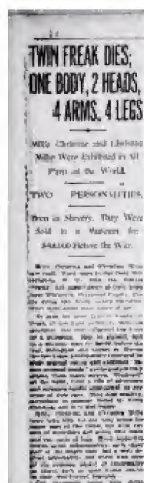
but one circulation. Millie Christine has two hearts that beat as one. While food taken into one mouth will sustain life it does not satisfy the pangs of hunger in the second.

After an examination by one of the physicians of her hands and shoulders to satisfy himself that there was no locus in the juncture, the two-headed nightingale favored the company with a duet. Said Mr. Smith to the GLOBE reporter: "Do you know that she has had several proposals of marriage. Yes, but they were mercenary motives, and she was shrewd enough to understand. Millie has laid by a snug sum for her old age, and to-day supports her father and mother in good shape."

Millie Christine speaks French, German, Italian and Spanish, and has appeared at Buckingham Palace and at Marlborough house by royal command. She stated last night that one of her faces resembled her father, the other her mother. Without doubt she is one of the strangest curiosities before the public. She appears at the diane museum during the week.

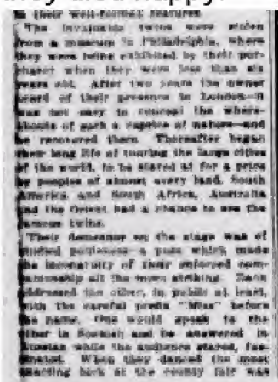


MILLIE CHRISTINE--THE TWO-HEADED WOMAN.

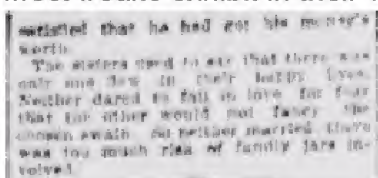


that the famous "twins" had passed away at their home near Whiteville, Columbus County, Millie dying two hours before Christine. They were about sixty years of age.

So pass the most famous freaks, or freak, if one must be finicky with his grammar, that ever delighted the heart of a showman. Born in slavery, sold to a museum man for \$40,000 before the war, kidnapped and hidden in Europe for two years, subsequently recovered by their original owner and exhibited "before crowned heads," as the posters truly stated, these negro women, "Siamesed" at the waist, lived a life of adventure and romance hardly approached by any other of their race. They died wealthy, according to popular belief in North Carolina, and they died happy.



Millie Christine and Christine Millie were born with but one body below the upper part of the trunk, but with two sets of shoulders and arms, two heads and two pairs of legs. Their respective brains acted independently, each upper half of the single body had a well defined personality, and there was none of the common aspect of abnormality or idiocy, such as most freaks exhibit in their well-formed features.



The invaluable twins were stolen from a museum in Philadelphia, where they were being exhibited by their purchaser when they were less

than six years old. After two years the owner heard of their presence in London-it was not easy to conceal the whereabouts of such a caprice of nature-and he recovered them. Thereafter began their long life of touring the large cities of the world, to be stared at for a price by people of almost every land. South America and South Africa, Australia and the Orient had a chance to see the famous twins.

Their demeanor on the stage was of studied politeness-a pose, which made the incongruity of their enforced companionship all the more striking. Each addressed the other, in public at least, with the careful prefix "Miss" before the name. One would speak to the other in Spanish and be answered in Russian while the audience stared, fascinated. When they danced the most exacting hick at the county fair was satisfied that he had got his money's worth.

The sisters used to say that there was only one flaw in their happy lives. Neither dared to fall in love for fear that the other would not fancy the chosen swain. So neither married, there was too much risk of family jars involved."

Millie and Christine were buried at Welches Creek Cemetery in Columbus County, North Carolina.

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All lakes can be inhabited by one of these beings, but some are known to change their appearance abruptly (eg, sudden strong wind or fog), to contain deep depressions, or to have a particular coloration; these are all signs of the Great Lynx's presence.



Agawa Pictograph Site

Representation of Mishipeshu, the great water lynx, from the Agawa pictograph site in Lake Superior Provincial Park, Ontario (courtesy of Serge Lemaître)

Mishipeshu

The most important underwater being for the OJIBWA is Mishipeshu, which means "the Great Lynx." This fantastic dragon-like animal resembles a feline with horns, symbols of his power. It has palmed paws that enable him to swim fast, and his back and tail are covered with scales. Mishipeshu lives in the depths of big lakes. Although he has a feline shape and is an amphibian, he is always described as a reptile. He is feared by all Ojibwa because he is the cause of waves, rapids and whirlpools, and he even breaks the ice in winter, thus claiming numerous victims. In the area of CHURCHILL River, there used to be a game called "Mishipeshu" that symbolized this being's drowning power. A child, randomly selected, held the role of the aquatic monster; he had to catch his friends and throw them into the water.

All lakes can be inhabited by one of these beings, but some are known to change their appearance abruptly (eg, sudden strong wind or fog), to contain deep depressions, or to have a particular coloration; these are all signs of the Great Lynx's presence.

It is sometimes said that the horns and scales of Mishipeshu are made of pure COPPER, and most indigenous populations in the GREAT LAKES see those aquatic monsters as the guardians of this metal. During a fight with a Mishipeshu, a youth reported that he broke a part of the monster's tail when hitting it with a paddle. This fragment was made of copper and he kept it to acquire luck at hunting and fishing. Although Mishipeshu and the other underwater beings are essentially considered harmful, they were also necessary to the Algonquians because they gave them protection and medicine. The Horned Snakes and the underwater Lynx were particularly dangerous, but they also secured successful hunts and an abundance of food. It was also possible to call upon their power to secure a good fish catch, although their help was most precious for some healings. MEDICINE BUNDLES were made of snake skin. These beings were also the guardians of the *midewigun*, the MIDEWIWIN lodge. Moreover, the term "Mishipeshu" was used as a family name, showing that this being was not only seen as harmful.

Although the most important enemy of the Mishipeshu and other underworld reptiles was the THUNDERBIRD, these also had to face the destruction programmed by NANABOZO in the myth that tells how the world was destroyed by a catastrophic flood.

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Mollie Fancher in bed.

History is populated by many strange and wonderful people. There was Jeremy Bentham, who lives on today as a mummy in the University of London, per his last will and testament. Elmer McCurdy was a two-bit outlaw who only became famous when his mummy popped up in a carnival side show and was discovered while filming an episode of the \$6 Million Dollar Man. Giovanni Aldini and Luigi Galvani performed ghoulis experiments that advanced the human understanding of how bodies function and simultaneously helped inspire a work of horror that

remains a genre staple even today.

Not every strange story from history is quite as entertaining as the ones mentioned above. Some are as odd as they are sad. Mollie Fancher, better known as the Brooklyn Enigma, would fall into the latter category. She was held up as an example of the paranormal acting in the real world by some, and as an example of a rare and little understood mental illness by others. Whatever the case may be, the story of Mollie Fancher remains one of the more mysterious to emerge from the 19th century.

‘a child of sorrow’

Mary J. Fancher, known as Mollie, was born in Attleboro, Massachusetts on August 16, 1848. She and her two surviving siblings moved with their parents, James and Elizabeth Fancher, to Brooklyn, New York in 1850. A few years later, she was enrolled in a private school. The first trauma in Mollie’s sad life occurred in 1855. Her mother died, and her father remarried and abandoned his children. Mollie’s aunt, Susan Crosby, took over care of the children.

Mollie suffered terribly during this time. She was described as ‘a child of sorrow’ before these traumatic events, and required special care, although it wasn’t clear exactly what her affliction was. Despite this, by all accounts she remained in good health until around age 15.

In 1864, Mollie was finishing her work at the Brooklyn Heights Seminary. Nearing graduation, she was looking forward to moving onward and upward with her life. She had looks to go with her brains—she was tall and slender, with a good complexion and an overall air of frailty that was the Victorian feminine ideal. Two months before graduation, this ideal of feminine frailty began to manifest in several health complaints, including nervous indigestion, weakness of the chest and frequent fainting spells. More seriously, she stopped eating and her already slight frame began to waste away even further. She was forced to drop out of school. Now, these types of complaints were not uncommon among Victorian women of a certain age and social standing, mostly because the frail, sickly role for women was reinforced by the culture of the time, including novels and plays. However, in Mollie Fancher these complaints were

rooted in a deep seated mental illness that would only completely show itself after two accidents.

The first was minor only in comparison to what would follow. Mollie's doctor prescribed horseback riding to cure her nervous indigestion. Horseback riding was commonly prescribed for all sorts of nervous complaints among women for centuries. If it seemed to work, it was probably because riding horses allowed women freedom and control they didn't often get in their daily life. Whatever the case, Mollie's prescription proved less than therapeutic. She was thrown from her horse in May 1864. She hit her head on a curbstone, knocking her unconscious. She also broke several ribs. For the next year, she suffered headaches and pains in her side. She might have recovered from this trauma and gone on to live a relatively normal life, if the second accident hadn't occurred on June 8, 1865.

Mollie had agreed to a marriage prior to the second accident. On June 8, she was finishing up some shopping related to the coming wedding. She went to step off a street-car on her way home. The conductor signaled the coachman to move on, and when the car lurched forward she lost her balance and fell. Her dress was caught on a hook on the rear of the car and she was dragged a city block before anyone noticed her. She was unconscious when they found her, and her ribs were broken. She was put to bed to heal. Her suitor broke off the marriage plans, although it isn't clear whether that had anything to do with her injuries. she would remain in bed for the rest of her life.

Bizarre symptoms and alleged clairvoyance

It was after Mollie took to bed that her case went from sad to plain bizarre. Her fifty-one years in bed were characterized by many varied and strange ailments that baffled observers and physicians alike. The symptoms that began shortly after her accident remained almost a constant for the rest of her life—namely, trances and violent spasms. Those early months were characterized also by lock jaw, vision problems, and fainting spells. She lived on remarkably little food, once reportedly going seven weeks without eating (although that should be taken with a grain of salt, because there were times she was force fed.) More modern doctors characterize the illness as a kind of hysteria. While that was a catch all term for any behavior deemed unladylike in Mollie's day, today hysteria refers to conversion disorder, where strong pent up anxieties are converted into physical symptoms. This is similar to how the people in Mattoon believed they were the victims of gas attacks, and showed symptoms such as fainting, dizziness, and vomiting. Mollie's was a form of motor hysteria, which was more common to pre-20th century societies where the belief in demonic possession and witchcraft were more common. One more modern example of mass motor hysteria was the Tanganyika Laughter epidemic, where a fit of laughter (among other symptoms) started in a girl's school and spread throughout the country over several months.

The strangest stories about Mollie Fancher, who would come to be known as the Brooklyn Enigma, occurred in a nine year period from 1866-1875. During this time, she lay with her arm drawn up over her head, her legs twisted, and her eyes closed. Despite this, she managed to write 6500 letters, sewed fine embroidery, kept a diary, and made wax flowers. Quite a lot for a bedridden woman with one usable hand. She was also said to be able to

read writing from great distances, read minds, and give prophecies. She became a sensation in a country obsessed with the supernatural. Spiritualism was in vogue in America and Britain at the time, and the belief in ghosts, spirit communication, and other supernatural phenomena were at an all time high. Mollie Fancher became something of a celebrity.

Many Mollies, but which one was real?

Doctors, then and now, dismiss the supernatural claims as so much hookum. But the psychiatric phenomenon at play was almost as strange, and as controversial in psychiatric communities, as the paranormal. In 1875, Mollie fell unconscious for a month, and when she awoke had no memory of the previous nine years. None of the letters or works of art seemed familiar to her, and she resumed conversations where they had left off nine years before. In Mollie's mind, the works of those nine years were from someone else, someone dead. This mysterious person was dubbed "Madame X."

Strangely enough, the trend continued. Mollie split into several selves. The Mollie who awakened after the nine year period and the month's unconsciousness was dubbed "Sunbeam" for her rosy personality. Sunbeam was the primary personality. This was the Mollie that saw visitors and attempted to recreate the artistic feats of her previous, more clairvoyant alternative.

Four more Mollies would emerge in 1876, and they would remain with her the rest of her life. Sunbeam ruled the daylight hours, but her "sisters" emerged after 11pm. The transitions were not easy. They were punctuated by trances and fits, as if the personalities fought to take over control.

Idol was the first personality to take over at night. She was jealous of the daytime Molly, and had a habit of undoing her embroidery or otherwise sabotaging Sunbeam's artistic efforts. The two personalities wrote letters to one another, in different handwriting. Idol's experience seemed to constitute Mollie's early childhood to the time of the first accident. Every night, she resumed her life right where she left off. Rosebud came after Idol, and couldn't be more different than her more surly counterpart. She spoke and behaved like a seven year old child, and when asked claimed she was seven. She only remembered what happened when she was present, but unlike the other personalities she was more given to wandering. She appeared first in 1875, and only appeared intermittently until 1886 when she took up a more permanent residence. Personality three was named Pearl, and she was a sweetheart, presenting with an age of about 17 or 18. She remembered events in Mollie's life up until about that age, but she couldn't remember the accidents. Finally, Ruby was a more outgoing version of Mollie, with a quick wit and robust energy. She couldn't care less what daytime Mollie got up to.

Mollie's case was, obviously, a very complex one. Today she is diagnosed as suffering from Multiple Personality Disorder, an extremely rare condition where a person's self fragments under extreme emotional strain. Less than 100 true cases have been diagnosed, and there is some debate in psychiatric circles as to whether it exists at all. Mollie's case might have been a good candidate for study, had scientists of the day paid more attention. Unfortunately, the supernatural trappings made many in the growing field of psychology shy away from it, and

so a great chance to understand the workings of the mysterious human brain was lost. As for Mollie, she and her various selves succumbed to illness in February 15, 1916, taking her secrets with her.

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Watch Nicaragua's Momotombo volcano's first known eruption in 110 years abc13.com



Friday, December 04, 2015
08:37AM

This week the famed Momotombo volcano in Nicaragua put on a show in its first known eruption in 110 years.

The long-inactive volcano, one of the country's most recognizable landmarks, began spitting ash into the sky on Tuesday, with some plumes reaching about 1,000 yards high.

The Momotombo volcano spews a large plume of gas and ash as seen from the rural community of Papaloná, in Leon, Nicaragua, Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2015. ((AP Photo/Esteban Felix))

The activity continued into Wednesday, when it began spewing lava.

The last confirmed eruption of the 4,255-foot volcano was on Jan. 16, 1905, according to the Smithsonian.

Despite its inactivity over the past century, the volcano has a destructive history. The entire city of Leon had to be relocated in 1610 after a particularly bad eruption destroyed it.

Today, the area surrounding the volcano has about 98,000 people living within 18 miles of it. Government spokeswoman Rosario Murillo said that it didn't appear the volcano was headed for heavily-populated areas.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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Frauds, hoaxes, and curiosities of all sorts have a long history in America. Something about the American character lends us to enjoying a good tall tale, no matter how ridiculous it is. That other, more famous facet of the American character—enterprise—has caused many a showman to fulfill that desire for all things strange. These tendencies have led to some fairly strange incidents in American history, from the robber whose mummy wound up on the set of a 1970s TV show to a pygmy mummy who some believe could rewrite the history of humanity.

Perhaps the strangest curiosities to grace the American stage were those of the stone giants discovered in the 19th century. The first was the Cardiff Giant, supposedly a petrified man discovered on a farm near Cardiff in New York state. The figure was lauded as proof of the Biblical stories of giants, a fulfillment of the notion that many Americans held that their homeland was the Promised Land. The giant turned out to be a hoax, of course, but even when the Cardiff Giant was outed as a fake the stone giant fad lost little steam. For about 50 years, it seemed every town was home to some sort of ancient remains.

Even among this weirdness, one story of a petrified man stood head and shoulders above the others. Dubbed “The Scientific Wonder of the Age,” a stone figure discovered in Montana purported not to be an ancient corpse, but rather a famous figure who met his unfortunate end in the modern era.

The discovery

Montana’s petrified man was allegedly discovered in the Missouri River, downstream from Fort Benton, in 1897. The man who discovered the figure, Tom Dunbar, claimed to have seen the body wedged in the river bed when the water was low. He hooked a rope around it and dragged it free of the sand, only to bury it in the sandy soil of the river bank a little ways away from the water. He returned eighteen months later with a wagon to retrieve his prize. Like any good stone giant discoverer, Dunbar immediately began to exhibit his prize, wowing tourists visiting Yellowstone National Park with his tale.

In September of 1899, Dunbar sold the figure to Arthur Wellington Miles, who promptly displayed it in a pine coffin in an empty building near his lumberyard. The curiosity brought in big crowds, eager to pay to see the wonderful sight. Miles raked in a tidy sum of \$60 a day (\$1500 in today’s money) from curiosity seekers. The hefty sums made Miles dream bigger. He began to look east, toward New York, where the stone giant craze originally began.

However, neither Dunbar nor Miles had attached any origin story to the figure so far. If Miles was going to make it big in the east, his petrified man would need to have a draw. Conveniently, Miles was struck by a memory of a miner who viewed the curiosity in Butte had said. The miner, whose testimony was recorded in an article published in the New York World on December 31, 1899, The miner said: “It is the General! God rest his soul! It is the General!”

The General

“The General” was none other than General Thomas Francis Meagher. An Irish revolutionary, Civil War General, and Governor of the Montana Territory in 1867, Thomas Meagher died under mysterious circumstances on the Missouri River, not far from where the statue that allegedly bore his likeness was found. The then governor disappeared the night of July 1, 1867, falling over the side of a steamboat into the Missouri River. Some suspected foul play, while others thought the fall might have been an unfortunate accident.

The petrified body seemed to indicate homicide. The statue seemed to have a hole in the head, which was concluded to be from the arrow of an Indian attacker. This same attacker bound the governor’s wrists after having dragged the stunned man out of the river. When the Indian heard Meagher’s friends

hew and cry on the steamboat, he threw the governor into the river and slipped into the night. Then, by some mysterious process, the body was petrified on the river bottom for Thomas Dunbar to find 30 years later.

With his backstory in place, Arthur Wellington Miles organized a train tour for the petrified governor. Beginning in December 1899, the tour would hit St. Paul, Chicago, and other cities on the way to the ultimate goal: New York.

Unfortunately for Miles and his associates, the tour was not near as profitable as they had hoped. The initial enthusiasm for petrified men had been dulled by the exposure of the Cardiff Giant and the Solid Muldoon as out and out frauds. Crowds were skeptical of yet another stone giant, even if it was allegedly the body of a war hero. The tour flopped, leaving the businessmen in the red.

Where is Montana's Petrified Man?

Montana's petrified man enjoyed only a brief career in the spotlight. Arthur Miles held on to the figure for a number of years after the failed eastern tour. He sold the statue not long after World War I, and ever since the figure's fate is murky at best. It popped up in the occasional fair or in the hands of a showman now and then through the early 20th century, but it has since been lost to history.

Unlike the Cardiff Giant, which was undeniably outed as a hoax, no one came forward to admit to making Montana's petrified man. Skeptics of the day did not debunk the hoax, content to simply poke fun at people's gullibility. In the wake of the Cardiff Giant fraud, no one but true believers and curiosity seekers took the idea of petrified men very seriously. While it is true that organic materials can become petrified given enough time, 30 years is hardly the time span needed for that to happen. Meaghers, more likely than not, met the fate of any other person lost to the water. There is no reason to think his fate was anything special. The petrified man was a hoax, an odd bit of flim flam now consigned to the junk drawer of history.

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When the Moors invaded West Cork and carried off Irish slaves

December 08, 2015 01:18 AM
2015-12-08T01:18:00-0800

irishcentral.com



An illustration of the Sack of Baltimore. Photo by: Wikimedia Commons

In the summer of 1631 the town of Baltimore in West Cork fell victim to a sensational attack by pirates. At that time the population consisted chiefly of Irish and settlers from England who had arrived some years earlier to work in the lucrative pilchard fishery under lease from the O'Driscoll chieftain, Sir Fineen O'Driscoll. Piracy was rife along the shores of West Cork, much of it of a home-grown variety; indeed the settlement's founder, Thomas Crooke, stood accused of involvement himself. However, the danger in this case was from much farther afield.



An illustration of the Sack of Baltimore. Photo by: Wikimedia Commons Photo by: Wikimedia Commons The coastline today. Baltimore, Cork.

On board two ships that left Algiers was a combined force of Dutch, Algerians and Turks under the command of one of the most successful leaders of Barbary pirates, a renegade Dutchman, Murat Reis the Younger. By the time they reached the coast of West Cork, more than 1,000 miles away, they had already seized a number of smaller vessels, imprisoning their crews. The captain of one was a Dungarvan man

by the name of John Hackett. Reis' original target was probably Kinsale, but Hackett declared the harbour there 'too hot' to enter and in return for his freedom he offered to pilot Reis to the defenceless village of Baltimore. Undetected, the pirates anchored outside the harbour 'about a musket shot from the shore' late in the evening of 19th June. From here they launched an attack on the sleeping village before dawn the next day.

The inhabitants were taken completely by surprise. More than 200 armed corsairs landed in the Cove, torching the thatched roofs of the houses and carrying off with them 'young and old out of their beds'. Moving on to the main village, the pirates took more captives before musket fire and the beating of a drum alerted the remaining villagers and persuaded Reis to end the raid. By that time more than 100 men, women and children had been taken. They were

*The coastline today.*

herded back to the ships, which bore them away from the coves of West Cork to the slave markets of North Africa.

The raid on Baltimore, immortalized in verse by the poet Thomas Davis, was the worst-ever attack by Barbary corsairs on the mainland of Ireland or Britain. Most of the names in the official report sound English, but it is likely that there were also a few

native Irish among the prisoners. What is certain is that very few of the 107 were ever heard of again (three women at most, who were ransomed up to 14 years after their abduction). The fate of the rest is unknown, but for many it would have been to end their days as galley slaves or concubines in the harems of Algiers. For his part Hackett was arrested and hanged on a cliff top outside the village.

*Baltimore, Cork.*

The Sack of Baltimore is fertile ground for conspiracy theories. They generally point the finger at the rapacious Sir Walter Coppinger who had been seeking to prise the village away from the O'Driscolls, oust the settlers and secure it for himself. Whether by accident or design, the pirates carried out part of this plan for him. In the aftermath of the raid the surviving villagers moved

inland to Skibbereen and elsewhere in search of greater security and Coppinger's designs on the village were realised. The Sack marked the end of the 400-year reign of the O'Driscolls as overlords of Baltimore.

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Moshi Moshi - What Does It Mean?

tofugu.com

Why Do Japanese People Say Moshi Moshi on the Phone?

And other ways to answer the telephone in Japanese

by Michael Richey

Answering the phone in Japanese seems like easy business. Moshi moshi. Most people know this “telephone hello” even if they don’t know any other Japanese words.

But if you say “moshi moshi” every time you answer the phone in Japan, you’ll end up in bad situations. There are several ways to answer the phone in Japanese. And you need to know the right situation for the right greeting.

But “moshi moshi” is an odd phrase. It doesn’t mean “hello” literally. And there’s a reason it’s mostly (but not always) used on the phone.

What Does Moshi Moshi Mean?



Photo by Rumpleteaser Photo by 乱力 WALLACE Photo by Taichiro Ueki Photo by Yari Hotaka Photo by MIKI Yoshihito

If you want a quick, conversational overview of the the meaning of moshi moshi, check out the video Koichi made years back. It features a cat, so you’ll definitely like it.

“Moshi” actually comes from the verb “mousu” (申す), which is a humble form of “to say” (言う). In the Edo period, it was used in normal conversation when speaking to someone of

higher status. Initially, the words used were “moushiagemasu” (申し上げます), “moushimasu” (申します) or “mousu” (申す). These all mean “I’m going to say (talk).” Eventually it was shortened to “moushi” (申し) and was used to catch somebody’s attention, like saying “hey!”

Technically, when you say “moshi moshi,” you’re politely saying “I’m going to talk” twice. But it feels more like, “Hey, dude.”

In short, the politeness level of the conjugations goes like this:

申し上げます > 申します > 申す > 申し

There are quiet a few options in this “moshi moshi menu” so be careful about which one you

use in which situation.

When Should You Use Moshi Moshi?



Photo by Rumpleteaser Photo by 瓦力 WALLACE Photo by Taichiro Ueki Photo by Yari Hotaka Photo by MIKI Yoshihito

You should use “moshi moshi” primarily when answering the telephone. But only when you receive a phone call from friends or family.

If there is a long pause or a lost connection during the call, you can use “moshi moshi” to make sure the person is still on the line (again only when the call is from a friend or family member).

For example, when your friend’s voice becomes choppy, you can say “moshi moshi kikoemasuka?” (もしもし聞こえますか?) which means “Hello, can you hear me?”

That’s the way you’ll use moshi moshi 90% of the time. If you’re answering the telephone and it’s someone other than family or friends on the other line, don’t say moshi moshi. There’s another set of words to use. We’ll get to those later.

You’re not going to use moshi moshi off the phone too much. But when you do it’ll usually be to get someone’s attention. If your friend is spacing out, you can wave your hand in front of their face and say, “moshi moshi.”

Or, if you see someone passed out on the sidewalk, you can tap their shoulder and say, “moshi moshi!”

There is one more non-telephone use of moshi moshi that’s now defunct. According to 20世紀B級ニュース (20th Century B-Grade News) people complained about police officers in 1913. Back then, police would stop people by saying “oi oi” (おいおい), “kora kora” (こらこら) or “oi kora” (おいこら). All of these are impolite ways to say “Hey!”

So on March 6th, 1913, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police announced that officers would no longer use such crude language. Instead they would shout “moshi moshi” to get someone’s attention or stop a robbery. Police don’t do say this anymore, but it may still be on the books as official police conduct.

Other Ways to Start a Japanese Phone Conversation

If you’re receiving a call from family or friends, moshi moshi is the way to go. But never use it in business situations. It’s considered rude because it’s a shortened phrase.

Younger Japanese people don’t always know not to use “moshi moshi” in formal telephone calls (Honestly. Kids today!). A “moshi moshi” may shock a sempai or two when young kids start making phone calls.



Photo by Rumpleteaser Photo by 瓦力_WALLACE Photo by Taichiro Ueki Photo by Yari Hotaka Photo by MIKI Yoshihito

How can you keep from making such a terrible faux pas? Here are alternate ways to receive calls (politely).

“Yes”

The easiest and safest way to answer the phone is saying “hai” (はい). It means “yes,” but on the phone it serves the same function as “hello.” Just remember to identify yourself and your company right after.

はい、トーフグ合同会社です。(はい、とーふぐごうどうがいしゃで

す。)

“hai, tofugu goudougaisha desu.”

“Hello, this is Tofugu, LLC.”

はい、金持株式会社のコウイチです。(はい、かねもちかぶしきがいしゃのこういちです。)

“hai, kanemochi kabushikigaisha no kouichi desu.”

“Hello, this is Koichi at Kanemochi Co., Ltd.”

Note: Japanese people usually use their family name on the phone. A more polite form of “です” would be preferable as well. See the example below.

はい、鈴木株式会社の佐藤でございます。(はい、すずきかぶしきがいしゃのさとうでございます。)

“hai, suzuki kabushikigaisha no satou de gozaimasu.”

“Hello, this is Satou at Suzuki Co., Ltd.”

Let's say you answer the phone and identify your company but not yourself. The person calling might ask what your name is.

You would use “moushimasu” (申します), the humble form of “say,” after your name. But only use it if the person on the other end has identified themselves. It's weird to use “moushimasu” if you don't yet know who you are talking to.

A: はい、スズキ株式会社でございます。(はい、すずきかぶしきがいしゃでございます。)

B: スズキ株式会社のどなたですか？(すずきかぶしきがいしゃのどなたですか？)

A1: 佐藤と申します。(さとうとうします。)/佐藤太郎と申します。(さとうたろうとうします。)

A: Hello, this is Suzuki Co., Ltd.

B: Who am I speaking to?

A1: This is Satou./ This is Taro Satou.

It might be more polite to mention your full name when asked to identify yourself, especially if your family name is common.

“Thank you for your call”

Another way to answer the phone is to thank the person who called with “odenwa arigatou gozaimasu” (お電話ありがとうございます). This means “thank you for calling.”

お電話有難うございます。株式会社田中の高橋でございます。(おでんわありがとうございます。かぶしきがいしゃたなかのたかはしでございます。)

“odenwa aritagtou gozaimasu. kabushikigaisha tanaka no takahashi de gozaimasu.”

“Thank you for your call. This is Takahashi at Tanaka Co., Ltd.”

Note: Depending on the company, “Kabushikigaisha” (Co., Ltd.) can come before or after the company name. Saying a company name correctly matters in Japanese culture. It’s considered rude to mess up a company’s name, even if it’s just the “co., Ltd.” part.

“I appreciate all you have done for us”

You can also go a step further and thank the caller for everything they’ve ever done ever.

The phrase is “itsumo osewa ni natte orimasu” (いつもお世話になっております) or “osewa ni natte orimasu” (お世話になっております). Use these two on the phone in business situations. There are other variations for other kinds of conversations too.

お世話になっております。ベーコンピザ渋谷店の伊藤でございます。(おせわになっております。ベーこんぴざしぶやてんのいとうでございます。)

“osewa ni natte orimasu. beekon piza shibuyaten no itou degozaimasu.”

“I appreciate all you have done for us. This is Itou at Bacon Pizza, Shibuya branch.”

It may seem odd in English, but it’s a common greeting in Japan. Say this as soon as you pick up the phone.

“I’ve received this forwarded call”

When you receive a forwarded call in a business situation, say “odenwa kawarimashita” (お電話変わりました).

If it’s a casual conversation, you could just say, “moshi moshi [name] desu” (もしもし[name]です). If a call is forwarded, the caller already knows the company and the call was forwarded to you. So just say your name.

But, if the call was forwarded from a different department, you might want to say your department name and your name.

お電話変わりました。会計課の渡辺でございます。(おでんわかわりました。かいけいかのわたなべでございます。)

"odenwa kawarimashita. kaikei ka no watanabe de gozaimasu."

"I've received this forwarded call. This is Watabane in the accounting division."

Fun story: Instead of "Odenwa kawarimashita," some people say "Oden wa niemashita ka?" (オデン煮えましたが?), which means "Is the oden cooked yet?" Apparently someone tried this five times at his job, and four out of five people didn't notice.

"Pardon me"

As I mentioned before, you can use "moshi moshi" on the phone when there's a long silence or you can't hear the person on the other line. But this is not okay for business situations.

Instead say "osoreirimasu" (恐れいます) meaning "pardon me." After that, say you're having trouble hearing. But do it indirectly.

Use "the telephone seems to be distant," which is "odenwa ga tooi you desu" (お電話が遠いようです).

This way it's nobody's fault. The telephone just went far away. Don't say "okoe ga tooi" (お声が遠い) or "your voice is distant" because that's blaming the person who you are talking to.

恐れいます。お電話が少々遠いようなのですが、もう一度おっしゃって頂けますでしょうか? (おそれいます。おでんわがしょうしょうとおいようなのですが、もういちどおっしゃっていただけますでしょうか。)

"osoreirimasu. odenwa ga shoushou tooi younana desu ga, mouichido osshatte itadakemasu deshouka?"

"Pardon me. The telephone seems to be distant. Could you say that again, please?"

Why Do Japanese People Say Moshi Moshi?



Photo by Rumpleteaser Photo by 瓦力 WALLACE Photo by Taichiro Ueki Photo by Yari Hotaka Photo by MIKI Yoshihito

We've got the moshi moshi vocab down pat. Use it on the phone and sometimes elsewhere. But why say it at all? Why not say "konnichiwa" or one of the other forms of hello in Japanese? Why does the telephone get its own special hello?

Historically, there are a three explanations.

Explanation 1: Foxes can't pronounce moshi moshi

What does the fox say? Not moshi

moshi, apparently.

Foxes can't pronounce moshi moshi properly. "Why would I care about foxes when answering the phone?" A valid question. If you're not aware of the dangers foxes pose to you and your loved ones, read this article about Kitsune, the magical foxes of Japanese fairy tales.

In short, magical foxes (called kitsune in Japan) are powerful and nasty creatures. They can shapeshift, create illusions, and love to screw people over. So if a malevolent kitsune were calling you on the phone, it would be bad news. That's why Japanese people started to say "moshi moshi" when answering the telephone. According to legendary Japanese folklorist, Lafcadio Hearn, foxes can't speak words fully.

- "...a fox knocks at doors with its tail. If you open, then you will see a man, or perhaps a beautiful girl, who will talk to you only in fragments of words, but nevertheless in such a way that you can perfectly well understand. A fox cannot pronounce a whole word, but a part only—as "Nish . . . Sa. . ." for "Nishida-San"; "degoz . . ." for "degozarimasu, or "uch . . . de . . ." for "uchi desuka?"

And from this the moshi moshi myth was born. The idea of foxes' speech impediment eventually evolved into the legend of their verbal achilles heel, "moshi moshi." Or so it stands to reason.

Explanation 2: Ghosts can't say moshi twice

This theory was uncovered by Friend of Tofugu (or FOT), Gakuranman. You can read all about his explanation on the Gakuranman blog. This origin of moshi moshi is similar to the fox explanation above, which gives validity to both.

Apparently, Japanese ghosts can only say "moshi" once. Why? I dunno. Ghost logic. Some things in life (or the afterlife) are just the way they are.

Let's say, you're walking around in the Edo period and see someone you know. You want to call out to them. But it's nighttime and pretty spooky. If you get close to them and say "moshi," they may get scared. That means an embarrassing yelp at best or a reflexive punch in the face at worst.

So you speak out "moshi moshi." This ensures the listener that the voice calling out to them on this dark and spooky night is, in fact, a human friend. Not an inhuman fiend.

Explanation 3: Telephone operators did it

And now for the explanation that seems the most plausible because it's actually supported by facts.

On December 16, 1890, telephones were first introduced to Japan. Today, this date is telephone day (電話の日/denwa no hi) in Japan. At the time, only rich people were able to afford telephones. Being rich, they were used to talking down to others. Thus, the standard "telephone hello" was "oi oi" (おいおい) or "hey YOU!" The person on the other end would

respond with “Hai, you gozaimasu” (はい、良うございます) or “Hai, you gozansu” (はい、良うござんす). Both of these are humble ways of saying, “Yes, I’m ready” meaning the person calling is ready to talk.

Of course, this abrupt “hey YOU!” got on people’s nerves when telephone operators used it. So the “oi oi” was changed to “moushiagemasu” (申し上げます) which is a humble form of “to say.” (remember the 申す politeness conjugation flow chart?)

“Moushiagemasu” was eventually shortened to “mousu mousu” (申す申す) for male operators and “moushi moushi” (申し申し) for female operators. Some male operators still used “oi oi” for a while though.

The person who made the change to “mousu mousu” or “moushi moushi” on the telephone was Shigenori Katougi (加藤木重教). He was an electrician for the Ministry of Engineering and went on to work for Tanaka Seisakusho (田中製作所). He traveled the United States in 1889 to study their telephone system.

During his visit, Katougi-san learned Americans say “hello” when answering the phone. Katougi’s American hosts asked what the telephone greeting was in Japan. He wasn’t sure what to tell them. It was either “oi oi,” “moushiagemasu,” “mousu mousu,” or “moushi moushi.” It would have required a lot of explanation (about as much as this article). So he just decided to tell the Americans that Japanese people say “moshi moshi” and it means “hello.”

This gave him the idea of a standardized “telephone hello” which he brought back to Japan. Soon after in 1893, the term “mousu mousu” was shortened to “mosu mosu” and “moushi moushi” was shortened “moshi moshi.”

But after a while there were fewer male telephone operators than female. So “mosu mosu” eventually disappeared and “moshi moshi” became the standard. Historians say this happened in 1902, and both men and women used “moshi moshi” after that.

One cute story from this era (which may or may not be true): There is a song “usagi to kame” (rabbit and turtle) in Japan. The song starts with the lyrics “moshi moshi kame yo kame san yo.”

The story goes: an operator answered a telephone call with “moshi moshi.” The man on the other line answered with “kame yo.” Both were so tickled they sang the rest of the song together.

Never Say “Mushi Mushi” Again

By now I’m sure you’re a big moshi moshi fan. You’ll wear moshi moshi t-shirts. You’ll stick a moshi moshi sign in your front yard. You’ve gone beyond the avoidance of the erroneous “mushi mushi.” You know when to use which telephone hello and why it’s used. Welcome to the moshi moshi elite.

Next time you answer the phone you’ll certainly not offend any Japanese businessmen. Or inviting trouble from devilish foxes.



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Wisconsin school board member wants Muppets book banned

NICOLE LYN PESCE

nydailynews.com

BY Nicole Lyn Pesce

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Updated: Wednesday, December 9, 2015, 1:28 PM

It's not easy being green.

A Marshfield, Wisc. school board member wants to prevent kindergartners from reading a book by Muppet legend Kermit because it's too graphic about poverty and is part of a curriculum that does not sufficiently highlight American "exceptionalism."

Mary Carney slammed the book, "For Every Child a Better World," which was really written by Jim Henson and published with the United Nations, for its drawings of suffering children, including one of a kid living in a box in the rain.



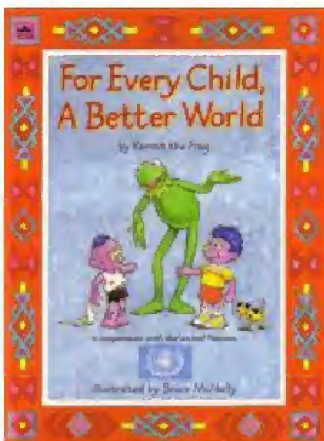
Greg Williams/Disney

Kermit the Frog has the author's credit on "For Every Child, A Better World," which was actually written by late Muppet creator Jim Henson.

She'll take her concerns to a school board meeting Wednesday in hopes of having the book banned.

"I just have concerns that it's too graphic, even though these are Muppets characters," Carney told the Marshfield News Herald. "Unfortunately in this world there is a lot of war and

strife and poverty; I understand that. I just don't know how appropriate that is to be teaching that to 5-year-olds.



Carney believes poverty was "too graphic" a topic for kindergarden students.

The plan called for teachers to start reading the book aloud to students early next year in hopes of teaching them how to be good citizens.

Kermit narrates the book, which "teaches young readers about the plight of young children who lack the basic human necessities and the efforts of the United Nations to provide such essentials as housing, water, food, and medical aid," according to Amazon.com.

The book, published in cooperation with the United Nations, features art of Muppet characters discussing the world's problems.



Hub-City Times

The 14 customer reviews on Amazon are mostly positive, with many parents lamenting that the 1993 book is out of print.

"What a beautiful book!" raved one customer. "It is so powerful in presenting these statements, yet the use of Muppet characters does not present a grotesque picture for young children."

Another review recommended it, adding, "I just can't understand how this book escaped all the literary awards and

media attention that other books have earned."

But not every kid can handle the truth.

"My parents read this book to me as a child, I am now 28. The illustrations left me traumatized," says Amazon commenter Jeremiah Moberly. "It comes from a great place and teaches valuable understanding about the world around us, but a little sad at times.

That aligns with Carney, who was elected to the Marshfield school board in April. She has also complained that the social studies curriculum "downplays American exceptionalism" by focusing too much on global affairs.

But the Marshfield school board vice president Amber Leifheit says that Carney is the only one in the district to express concern about the Muppets book.

"Looking at it, I do not have concerns," Leifheit told the Marshfield News Herald. "It shows compassion for people other than yourself. That's a good thing."

(edited)17 hours ago

Tom Fibi

American "exceptionalism." - Don't tell them about the world, only tell them how great we are. Shame on Carney.

(edited)14 hours ago

Roy Galarneau

I'm sure if Mrs Carney opened her eyes, she could probably find homelessness, hunger and poverty in Mansfield, Wisconsin.

This book is relevant to every town, county and state.

(edited)13 hours ago

Steve Florentz

Yes it is, but Carney is an elitest, who does not care for the poor and hungry!

(edited)12 hours ago

B M

Mrs Carney won't open her eyes because she's a member of the Central Wisconsin Tea

Party. Their agenda is to take control over school policy, choices and millions of dollars in taxpayer money. See links below

<http://www.marshfieldnewsherald.com/story/news/local/2015/02/06/carney-district-continues-fail-communicating/23011291/>

<http://www.cincinnati.com/article/20140121/NEWS0102/301210029/Fiscal-conservatives-rule-more-local-school-boards>

<http://www.labornotes.org/2015/11/colorado-teachers-and-parents-recall-hostile-school-board-members>

(edited)17 hours ago

Le Roy Waring

Ban it because kids learning about reality is unrealistic.....extreme sarcasm.

(edited)13 hours ago

JustACanadian

At 5 years old why can't kids just be kids? Plenty of time later to be run over by life's problems.

(edited)12 hours ago

Bklyn2Va

Because most of your views of the world, how you fit into it, and most of all empathy towards others is instilled at that early age. Kids are far more flexible than adults. That's why it's easier to have a 5 year old buy into something than a 15 year old.

Religion would be done if they couldn't recruit until 18!

(edited)12 hours ago

jeannette

So we should be burning "Bambi" for our five year olds who could now probably out skill any of us in this electronic world? At five years old, how different today is from your world at 5.

This is when we begin to teach the little ones values, thanks and no thanks, this is when we also teach sharing, this is when we teach do unto others..... so why on earth can we not teach how lucky we are and how to remember others.

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Mysterious S.C. rock carvings displayed

By Hannah Miller Correspondent

Years ago – nobody knows how many – people of a long-forgotten culture carved symbols and human figures on a large creekside rock in upper South Carolina. Now, the 30-by 40-foot section of boulder and the 32 symbols and figures it contains are the centerpiece of the new Hagood Creek Petroglyph Site of South Carolina, open Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at Pickens County's Historic Hagood Mill site. It is probably the most accessible site for viewing petroglyphs (rock art) in the Southeast, according to Tommy Charles, the retired S.C. archaeologist whose S.C. Rock Art Survey discovered it in 2003. Around the rock, Pickens County has built a two-room museum, with one room explaining the rock art survey work, the other a darkened chamber where special lighting and Charles' recorded voice highlight the drawings on the rock. The special lighting is needed because erosion has partially erased the 18 human figures and 12 symbols thought to be prehistoric, plus a couple markings thought to have come later. Because of the erosion, these petroglyphs are not visible in broad daylight, and survey volunteers missed them the first time they searched the area. But one volunteer went back on a rainy day when the incisions stood out in bolder relief. "Tom, you're not going to believe this," he told Charles when he excitedly called him. "That Hagood rock is covered with little people." The 18 little people average about 5 inches high, with stick arms and legs and sometimes, incredible sexual endowment. There's one box-like figure with head and legs that researchers have dubbed "Refrigerator Man" (or "Refrigerator Woman"). Who drew them – and when – is a mystery. Unlike the famed petroglyphs of the American Southwest, these cannot be carbon dated because the moist Eastern climate washes away the organic matter that carbon dating depends on. Charles thinks the little people and a dozen of the symbols are prehistoric because they are patiently pecked with stones. Metal carving tools came later, with the Europeans. The pictures also show no sign of European culture, such as guns and clothes. "They could be 400 years old. They could be 4,000 years old. We just don't know," he said. They do show, however, that "people have been stomping over these hills for a long, long time." Want to go? Hagood Creek Petroglyph Site, 138 Hagood Mill Rd. Hours: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, Friday-Saturday. Cost: Free (\$5 parking on third Saturdays.) Handicapped-accessible. No photography of rock. Directions: Pickens, S.C., is 20 miles west of Greenville, S.C. From Pickens, take U.S. 178 north 3 miles; turn left on Hagood Mill Road to Historic Hagood Mill. Details: ; www.visitpickenscounty.com.

charlotteobserver.com

New Hagood Creek Petroglyph Site showcases petroglyphs



of 2

This figure, dubbed "Refrigerator Man" (or "Refrigerator Woman"), was pecked out by someone using a stone. S.C. Rock Art Survey



*Unknown hand-carved stick figures representing humans are on a rock at Hagood Creek
Petroglyph Site. S.C. Rock Art Survey*

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Mystery noise hell over at last for residents

Monday 23 November 2015

harwichandmanningtreestandard.co.uk

A MYSTERY has been solved after a councillor traced the source of a noise plaguing Witham residents at night.

The low humming noise was coming from the Anglian Water treatment plant in Blackwater Lane, Witham, and had been bothering people in the town for more than a year.

Angela Kilmartin said she put pressure on the company to call in acoustic experts.

She said: "The length of time of the complaints should surely tell someone that this is not a flash in the pan.

"We can't have a lot of citizens of Witham, or anywhere else, suffering from the effects of an industrial unit."

Pitt Avenue resident John Day asked Mrs Kilmartin to look into the noise, which became worse at night when the A12 noise died down.

He presented the councillor with flowers at a Witham Town Council and said: "The last year me and my wife have endured hell.

"You could put your fingers on the window and feel the vibrations in the frames. We had acoustic glass fitted, which I can't afford. I filled up my air vents and brickwork.

"I was being woken up at 1am, I was on sleeping tablets. In the end I found a councillor, she got on to Anglian Water and she was like a dog with a bone."

Last month, the firm called in noise reduction firm Wakefield Acoustics and the noise has now stopped.

Residents had reported hearing the noise in Humber Road, Holst Avenue, Church Street, Calamint Road, Hawkes Road, Purcell Road, Blackwater Lane and Laurence Avenue.

Mrs Kilmartin told the meeting: "Mr Day is not the only one who has been concerned about this. He has been banging his head against brick wall coverups.

"Anglian Water constantly reiterate that they are neighbourhood-friendly – at last they are."

Sarah Dobson, of Anglian Water, said: "We are pleased there has been a reduction in noise disturbance.

"No changes have been made to the site. However, we continue to check, service and clean certain equipment over and above its usual maintenance schedule to ensure it is working optimally and not generating additional noises during the night.

"Our sound-deadening barriers remain in place as a precaution.

"We would like to reassure customers we are taking it seriously and will do all we can to address any issues identified from our investigations."

A Braintree Council spokesman said: "We've been in contact with the complainant and visited the area at different times of the day and night, but we have been unable to identify a statutory noise nuisance at their property.

"Throughout this time, we have liaised with Anglian Water to encourage them to monitor the situation and make appropriate improvements where possible.

"We will continue to work with them as necessary to improve the environment for nearby residents."

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Mystery of cars 'levitating' in bizarre accident solved

This weird CCTV footage of cars jumping into the air in China has been shared thousands of times online appears to have a very simple explanation

Pedestrians look on in horror as a man steps out into the road and raises his hands.

Seconds later a minibus suddenly jumps into the air and flips onto its side.

Two other nearby vehicles also lift off the road.



The cars appear to jump off of the road (PHOTO: Newsflare)

The weird accident was captured by CCTV cameras last week in Xingtai, China and has since been shared thousands of times online.

It may sound like something out of Star Wars, but if you look very closely at the video, you can just about make out what actually happened.

Just before the first minibus rises into the air, you can see a faint black line to the left of the screen, which police

believe was a cable or thick wire.



A cable became tangled in a street cleaner (PHOTO: Newsflare)

It appears that a cable became tangled in a street cleaner that is seen to the right of the screen, which essentially tripped up the vehicles, lifting them into the air.

Fortunately, no-one was injured in the incident.

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Cops: Naked Man, 19, Carjacked Federal Express Truck, But Could Not Figure Out How To Drive Vehicle

thesmokinggun.com

December 9, 2015

A naked man who carjacked a Federal Express delivery truck--but then fled the vehicle when he could not figure out how to drive it--has been arrested,



according to California police.

Investigators allege that Albert Luna, 19, got into the truck around 7 PM Saturday as the driver was removing a package from the rear of the vehicle, which was parked in front of a residence in the city of Coachella.

Luna demanded the truck's keys, which were turned over by the driver (who, cops report, "ran to a nearby residence and reported the incident").

While Luna succeeded in starting the truck, the accused carjacker's getaway was not smooth. He "did not know how to operate the vehicle and fled the area on foot, abandoning the victim's vehicle,"

according to police.

Based on information provided by the Fed Ex driver, the suspect was described as "a Hispanic male adult, 18-20 years, thin build, short hair, and not wearing any clothes."

Luna, a Coachella resident, was arrested Sunday and charged with carjacking. Pictured above, he is being held in the Riverside County jail on the felony count.

It is unclear why Luna was naked when he sought to boost the Fed Ex truck. Additionally, it is unknown whether his lack of clothing was a drug-related condition.

The Smoking Gun

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Neolithic discovery: why Orkney is the centre of ancient Britain

Robin McKie

Saturday 6 October 2012 Last modified on Wednesday 21 May 2014

theguardian.com

Long before the Egyptians began the pyramids, Neolithic man built a vast temple complex at the top of what is now Scotland. Robin McKie visits the astonishing Ness of Brodgar



the ring of brodgar

Drive west from Orkney's capital, Kirkwall, and then head north on the narrow B9055 and you will reach a single stone monolith that guards the entrance to a spit of land known as the Ness of Brodgar. The promontory separates the island's two largest bodies of freshwater, the Loch of Stenness and the Loch of Harray. At their furthest edges, the lochs' peaty brown water laps against fields and hills that form a natural amphitheatre; a landscape peppered with giant rings of stone,

chambered cairns, ancient villages and other archaeological riches.

This is the heartland of the Neolithic North, a bleak, mysterious place that has made Orkney a magnet for archaeologists, historians and other researchers. For decades they have tramped the island measuring and excavating its great Stone Age sites. The land was surveyed, mapped and known until a recent chance discovery revealed that for all their attention, scientists had completely overlooked a Neolithic treasure that utterly eclipses all others on Orkney – and in the rest of Europe.

This is the temple complex of the Ness of Brodgar, and its size, complexity and sophistication have left archaeologists desperately struggling to find superlatives to describe the wonders they found there. "We have discovered a Neolithic temple complex that is without parallel in western Europe. Yet for decades we thought it was just a hill made of glacial moraine," says discoverer Nick Card of the Orkney Research Centre for Archaeology. "In fact the place is entirely manmade, although it covers more than six acres of land."

Once protected by two giant walls, each more than 100m long and 4m high, the complex at Ness contained more than a dozen large temples – one measured almost 25m square – that were linked to outhouses and kitchens by carefully constructed stone pavements. The bones of sacrificed cattle, elegantly made pottery and pieces of painted ceramics lie scattered round the site. The exact purpose of the complex is a mystery, though it is clearly ancient. Some parts were constructed more than 5,000 years ago.

The people of the Neolithic – the new Stone Age – were the first farmers in Britain, and they arrived on Orkney about 6,000 years ago. They cultivated the land, built farmsteads and rapidly established a vibrant culture, erecting giant stone circles, chambered communal tombs – and a giant complex of buildings at the Ness of Brodgar. The religious beliefs that underpinned these vast works is unknown, however, as is the purpose of the Brodgar

temples.

"This wasn't a settlement or a place for the living," says archaeologist Professor Colin Richards of Manchester University, who excavated the nearby Barnhouse settlement in the 1980s. "This was a ceremonial centre, and a vast one at that. But the religious beliefs of its builders remain a mystery."

What is clear is that the cultural energy of the few thousand farming folk of Orkney dwarfed those of other civilisations at that time. In size and sophistication, the Ness of Brodgar is comparable with Stonehenge or the wonders of ancient Egypt. Yet the temple complex predates them all. The fact that this great stately edifice was constructed on Orkney, an island that has become a byword for remoteness, makes the site's discovery all the more remarkable. For many archaeologists, its discovery has revolutionised our understanding of ancient Britain.

"We need to turn the map of Britain upside down when we consider the Neolithic and shrug off our south-centric attitudes," says Card, now Brodgar's director of excavations. "London may be the cultural hub of Britain today, but 5,000 years ago, Orkney was the centre for innovation for the British isles. Ideas spread from this place. The first grooved pottery, which is so distinctive of the era, was made here, for example, and the first henges – stone rings with ditches round them – were erected on Orkney. Then the ideas spread to the rest of the Neolithic Britain. This was the font for new thinking at the time."

It is a view shared by local historian Tom Muir, of the Orkney Museum. "The whole text book of British archaeology for this period will have to be torn up and rewritten from scratch thanks to this place," he says.

Farmers first reached Orkney on boats that took them across the narrow – but treacherously dangerous – Pentland Firth from mainland Scotland. These were the people of the New Stone Age, and they brought cattle, pigs and sheep with them, as well as grain to plant and ploughs to till the land. The few hunter-gatherers already living on Orkney were replaced and farmsteads were established across the archipelago. These early farmers were clearly successful, though life would still have been precarious, with hunting providing precious supplies of extra protein. At the village of Knap o'Howar on Papay the bones of domesticated cattle, sheep and pigs have been found alongside those of wild deer, whales and seals, for example, while analysis of human bones from the period suggest that few people reached the age of 50. Those who survived childhood usually died in their 30s.

Discarded stone tools and shards of elegant pottery also indicate that the early Orcadians were developing an increasingly sophisticated society. Over the centuries, their small farming communities coalesced into larger tribal units, possibly with an elite ruling class, and they began to construct bigger and bigger monuments. These sites included the 5,000-year-old village of Skara Brae; the giant chambered grave of Maeshowe, a Stone Age mausoleum whose internal walls were later carved with runes by Vikings; and the Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar, two huge neighbouring circles of standing stones. These are some of the finest Neolithic monuments in the world, and in 1999 they were given World Heritage status

by Unesco, an act that led directly to the discovery of the Ness of Brodgar.

"Being given World Heritage status meant we had to think about the land surrounding the sites," says Card. "We decided to carry out geophysical surveys to see what else might be found there." Such surveys involve the use of magnetometers and ground-penetrating radar to pinpoint manmade artefacts hidden underground. And the first place selected by Card for this electromagnetic investigation was the Ness of Brodgar.

The ridge was assumed to be natural. However, Card's magnetometers showed that it was entirely manmade and bristled with features that included lines of walls, concentric pathways and outlines of large buildings. "The density of these features stunned us," says Card. At first, given its size, the team assumed they had stumbled on a general site that had been in continuous use for some time, providing shelter for people for most of Orkney's history, from prehistoric to medieval times. "No other interpretation seemed to fit the observations," adds Card. But once more the Ness of Brodgar would confound expectations.

Test pits, a metre square across, were drilled in lines across the ridge and revealed elaborate walls, slabs of carefully carved rock, and pieces of pottery. None came from the Bronze Age, however, nor from the Viking era or medieval times. Dozens of pits were dug over the ridge, an area the size of five football pitches, and every one revealed items with a Neolithic background.

Then the digging began in earnest and quickly revealed the remains of buildings of startling sophistication. Carefully made pathways surrounded walls – some of them several metres high – that had been constructed with patience and precision.

"It was absolutely stunning," says Colin Richards. "The walls were dead straight. Little slithers of stones had even been slipped between the main slabs to keep the facing perfect. This quality of workmanship would not be seen again on Orkney for thousands of years."

Slowly the shape and dimensions of the Ness of Brodgar site revealed themselves. Two great walls, several metres high, had been built straight across the ridge. There was no way you could pass along the Ness without going through the complex. Within those walls a series of temples had been built, many on top of older ones. "The place seems to have been in use for a thousand years, with building going on all the time," says Card.

More than a dozen of these temples have already been uncovered though only about 10% of the site has been fully excavated so far.

"We have never seen anything like this before," says York University archaeologist Professor Mark Edmonds. "The density of the archaeology, the scale of the buildings and the skill that was used to construct them are simply phenomenal. There are very few dry-stone walls on Orkney today that could match the ones we have uncovered here. Yet they are more than 5,000 years old in places, still standing a couple of metres high. This was a place that was meant to impress – and it still does."

But it is not just the dimensions that have surprised and delighted archaeologists. Two years ago, their excavations revealed that haematite-based pigments had been used to paint external walls – another transformation in our thinking about the Stone Age. "We see Neolithic remains after they have been bleached out and eroded," says Edmonds. "However, it is now clear from Brodgar that buildings could have been perfectly cheerful and colourful."

The men and women who built at the Ness also used red and yellow sandstone to enliven their constructions. (More than 3,000 years later, their successors used the same materials when building St Magnus' Cathedral in Kirkwall.) But what was the purpose of their construction work and why put it in the Ness of Brodgar? Of the two questions, the latter is the easier to answer – for the Brodgar headland is clearly special. "When you stand here, you find yourself in a glorious landscape," says Card. "You are in the middle of a natural amphitheatre created by the hills around you."

The surrounding hills are relatively low, and a great dome of sky hangs over Brodgar, perfect for watching the setting and rising of the sun, moon and other celestial objects. (Card believes the weather on Orkney may have been warmer and clearer 4,000 to 5,000 years ago.) Cosmology would have been critical to society then, he argues, helping farmers predict the seasons – a point supported by scientists such as the late Alexander Thom, who believed that the Ring of Brodgar was an observatory designed for studying the movement of the moon.

These outposts of Neolithic astronomy, although impressive, were nevertheless peripheral, says Richards. The temple complex at the Ness of Brodgar was built to be the most important construction on the island. "The stones of Stenness, the Ring of Brodgar and the other features of the landscape were really just adjuncts to that great edifice," he says. Or as another archaeologist put it: "By comparison, everything else in the area looks like a shanty town."

For a farming community of a few thousand people to create such edifices suggests that the Ness of Brodgar was of profound importance. Yet its purpose remains elusive. The ritual purification of the dead by fire may be involved, suggests Card. As he points out, several of the temples at Brodgar have hearths, though this was clearly not a domestic dwelling. In addition, archeologists have found that many of the stone mace heads (hard, polished, holed stones) that litter the site had been broken in two in exactly the same place. "We have found evidence of this at other sites," says Richards. "It may be that relatives broke them in two at a funeral, leaving one part with the dead and one with family as a memorial to the dead. This was a place concerned with death and the deceased, I believe."

Equally puzzling was the fate of the complex. Around 2,300BC, roughly a thousand years after construction began there, the place was abruptly abandoned. Radiocarbon dating of animal bones suggests that a huge feast ceremony was held, with more than 600 cattle slaughtered, after which the site appears to have been decommissioned. Perhaps a transfer of power took place or a new religion replaced the old one. Whatever the reason, the great temple complex – on which Orcadians had lavished almost a millennium's effort – was abandoned and forgotten for the next 4,000 years.

For more information or to donate to the dig, go to orkneyarchaeologysociety.org.uk

comments

- bewarethedia

6 Oct 2012 11:36

Interesting article. Thanks.

- Neurostrike

6 Oct 2012 11:36

So Prometheus isn't far off the mark then?

When are we launching a mission to find The Engineers?

And can we not have any malevolent androids on board this time please?

- brookben

6 Oct 2012 11:37

That Scottish bloke off the telly didn't say that.

- Yevgeni

6 Oct 2012 11:38

Long before the Egyptians began the pyramids...

Hooray! Finally the proof I needed to tell my friends that it's not true Europeans were dragging their knuckles along the ground whilst people in Asia and Africa were building civilizations. Thanks for the article Robin!

And this is really cool, I'd like to visit it.

- brookben

6 Oct 2012 11:42

Neolithic discovery: why Orkney is the centre of ancient Britain...that Scottish guy off the telly said it was a Neolithic site at the back of McDonalds on the M6 slip road at jnc 15.

- CathyRozel

6 Oct 2012 11:44

61 62

This is a tremendous article and I would love some photographs of the findings and images of how you think the parts already uncovered would have looked like. Hope for follow up.

- tomkun

6 Oct 2012 11:46

15 16

Just wow

- calmeilles

6 Oct 2012 11:48

This sounds wonderful, I should love to visit.

For a farming community of a few thousand people to create such edifices suggests that the Ness of Brodgar was of profound importance.

It is too obvious to ask: if the this site was of such importance might not it's "catchment area" have spread beyond, perhaps well beyond Orkney itself?

- WSobchak

6 Oct 2012 11:52

3 4

Amazing. I've just found the dig blog. Fantastic article, cheers.

- nocod

6 Oct 2012 11:53

Why oh why didn't we invent the camera first.

- duhjaan

6 Oct 2012 11:57

Orkney, where the demons dwell,
Where the banshees live,
And they do live well,

- calmeilles

6 Oct 2012 11:57

Can see some pictures on Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/tags/nessofbrodgar/>

- showmaster

6 Oct 2012 11:59

Bit sketchy this sort of thing. Wood henges and much else came before stone circles and the slow retreat of the ice sheet indicates a modicum of difficulty in Orkney being suddenly the cradle of Britain.

Paviland dates to 30,000 years ago and the first post-Ice Age settlers leave a 10,000 year gap between the resettlement of Britain and the Ring being constructed. Were they perfecting spaghetti knitting or watching Crossroads in the meantime?

- Coigach

6 Oct 2012 12:00

Orkney , of the 'whale-shaped islands' of George Mackay Brown, is a world-class place, in so many ways. Fantastic archaeology - Skara Brae to Maes Howe to Brodgar, beautiful scenery (esp. on Hoy), wonderful local produce (from whisky to beef to real ales to cheese) and the most wonderful accent in the UK.

Great article.

- Bobshaw2

6 Oct 2012 12:02

By a weird coincidence I've just been watching the old Time Team episode set on Bodmin Moor featuring the rather unusual 500m long double walled feature to be found there. I wonder if it ties in with the ones found in Orkney.

Oh, and sorry to be pedantic picture caption people but 'stone circle' and 'henge' are not synonymous by a long chalk (flint, granite, whatever*).

* Poor attempt at landscape archeology humour.

- blinkyblinkyblinky

6 Oct 2012 12:07

Amazing. Looking forward to seeing some artists' impressions of what it looked like. The area in the photo is only about 1 football pitch so I can't picture exactly what's being described, but amazing to think that this place which seems so remote now used to be the cutlural/spiritual centre of Britain thousands of years before the Romans made their presence felt.

If I had a time machine, this place/time would definitely be on the itinerary.

- maisiedotts

6 Oct 2012 12:08

So much for the pict's being little more than neanderthals eh?

- boveyphil

6 Oct 2012 12:09

Fantastic - many thanks for telling us about this.

Dartmoor is covered with artifacts such as stone rows from the samr period but of

course was much further south and presumably drier and warmer in summer and colder in winter. Abandonment of many of the settlements associated with the ceremonial places coincided with the climatic deterioration that led to the formation of peat.

- nocausetoadopt

6 Oct 2012 12:09

Sensational.

And the was article written with infectious enthusiasm.

Thanks.

- Belshazzar

6 Oct 2012 12:09

The white walkers roamed these lands far before... the wildlings knew this, as should we!

- maisiedotts calmeilles

6 Oct 2012 12:11

Your better with the dig diary [HERE](#)

- marblewill

6 Oct 2012 12:11

Oh no— please don't tell Salmand

- Peter61

6 Oct 2012 12:14

Typical archaeologist making huge claims on tiny amounts of evidence....! Yes the site is very impressive, but you would expect that in the highland zone where there is a wealth of raw material lying around. How on earth could a tiny island north of Scotland be the 'centre of Neolithic Britain'? How would the logistics of the time back that up? What about links with continental Europe? When Card talks about turning the map "of Britain up-side down when we consider the Neolithic and shrug off our south-centric attitudes" he sounds like an apologist for the SNP....You're dealing with tiny numbers of the jig-saw mate, don't overdo it....!

- MichaelofNorwich

6 Oct 2012 12:17

What was the climate and the landscape like in this part of the world at that part of time?

- cbarr Peter61

6 Oct 2012 12:17

I think your underestimating the process of the previking nordic nations in trade at the time when the climate was more conducive to the production of grains.

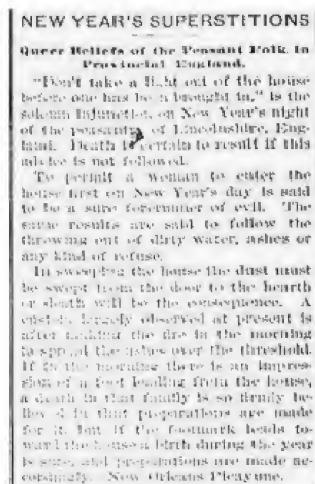
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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

New Year's Superstitions



"Don't take a light out of the house before one has been brought in,' is the solemn injunction on New Year's night of the peasants of Lincolnshire, England. Death is certain to result if this advice is not followed.

To permit a woman to enter the house first on New Year's day is said to be a sure forerunner of evil. The same results are said to follow the throwing out of dirty water, ashes, or any kind of refuse.

In sweeping the house the dust must be swept from the door to the hearth or death will be the consequence. A custom largely observed at present is after making the fire in the morning to spread the ashes over the threshold. If in the morning there is an impression of a foot leading from the house, a death in that family is so firmly believed in that preparations are made for it, but if the footmark leads toward the house a birth during the year is sure, and preparations are made accordingly."

New Year Superstitions.

It is considered a sure sign of death to see one's own shadow in the moonlight on New Year's eve.

You court misfortune by leaving the house on New Year before some one has entered it. You must hope for the luck, moreover, of having the first to enter a dark haired man.

Seeking to know what good or evil the New Year would bring, superstitious people in the long ago girt themselves with swords and sat on the roof of their houses on New Year's eve. They also knelt at the crossroads (on a cowhide) for the same purpose. The first thing brought, one might think, would be pneumonia.

It is bad luck to carry anything out of the house on the New Year before something has been brought in.

But the best luck of all, which even those most scornful of portents may not despise, is to begin the New Year owing no man a cent.—Philadelphia Press.

"It is considered a sure sign of death to see one's own shadow in the moonlight on New Year's eve.

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Santa Isn't Dead! Newspaper Says Sorry For Fake Obituary huffingtonpost.com

Saint Nick passed at the age of 226, according to the announcement in Norway's Aftenposten.

Don't worry, kids, Santa isn't dead!

But a newspaper in Norway is sure to be on this year's naughty list after it accidentally published a fake obituary for Father Christmas.

The hoax announcement in Aftenposten claimed Saint Nick died at the age of 226 in the country's most northern point of Nordkapp on Dec. 3, the BBC reported.

It also revealed his funeral would be held at the North Pole Chapel on Dec. 28, according to the Evening Standard.

His birthdate was given as Dec. 12, 1788 -- but no cause of death was stated.

It's unclear who created the pretend death notice, or how it ended up in the publication's obituary page. It was later removed from the newspaper's website, Metro reported.

Norway's second-largest newspaper later released a statement to apologize for the incident and said it was reviewing its internal procedures.

"Aftenposten has strict guidelines for both the content and use of symbols in our obituaries," a spokesman said, per the BBC.

"This ad is a violation of these and should never have been published. We will find out what has happened," he added.

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The introduction of street lighting to 17th-century London saw an explosion of nocturnal activity in the capital, most of it centring around the selling of sex. Matthew Beaumont explores how some writers, with the intention of condemning these nefarious goings-on, took to the city's streets after dark, and in the process gave birth to a peculiar new literary genre.



Night (1736), the fourth painting from William Hogarth's Four Times of the Day series – Source .

At the end of the seventeenth century a new literary genre or subgenre emerged in England, one that might be characterized as the nocturnal picaresque. Its authors, who were moralists or satirists or social tourists, or all of these at the same time, and who were almost invariably male, purported to recount their episodic adventures as pedestrians patrolling the streets of the metropolis at night.

These narratives, which often provided detailed portraits of particular places, especially ones with corrupt reputations, also paid close attention to the precise times when more or less nefarious activities unfolded in the streets. As distinct from diaries, they were noctuaries (in his *Dictionary of the English Language* [1755], Samuel Johnson defined a “noctuary” simply as “an account of what passes at night”).¹ These apparently unmediated, more or less diaristic accounts of what happened during the course of the night on the street embodied either a tragic or a comic parable of the city, depending on whether their authors intended to celebrate its nightlife or condemn it as satanic.

The nocturnal picaresque, composed more often in prose than verse, was a distinctively modern, metropolitan form that, like several other literary genres that emerged in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, comprised a response to the dramatic social and architectural transformations of the metropolis after the Great Fire of 1666.



This was the epoch when both the West End, which the aristocracy colonized, and the suburbs to the south and east of the City, where the poor were exiled, expanded exponentially. By 1700, when its population reached approximately 550,000, London had outstripped Paris to become the largest city in Europe. Its concentration of imperial trade, industry and government made it the most advanced and most energetic metropolitan centre in the world. Leo Hollis has even speculated that “the true ‘English Revolution’

England's Glory, a map of London by Robert Walton from 1676, showing how London had rebuilt itself just 10 years after the Great Fire – Source (not openly licensed).

was seen not in the 1640s, or in 1688, but in the 1690s”, when the expansion and recomposition of London “shattered the

traditional urban space into enclaves and modern neighbourhoods” and “the city at large became a fluid mixture of anonymous and closely knit communities formed by new relationships dependent on work, status, religion and gender”.²

These social and topographical changes, especially this segregation, reshaped people's psychogeographical relationship to the metropolis and its proliferating, increasingly complex forms. A number of different types of publication mapped and explored London after the Fire. These included guidebooks, street directories, topographical surveys, urban instruction manuals and antiquarian tour-books. They also included anti-pastoral poems, or “urban georgics”, such as Jonathan Swift's “Description of a City Shower” (1710) and John Gay's *Trivia* (1716). And, most prominently, pioneering instances of the novel, as practiced in particular by Daniel Defoe – “probably the first writer to grasp the exotic possibilities of city life with its unpredictable energies tempting the urban adventurer into ever new situations.”³

The nocturnal picaresque, which provided a moral map of the metropolitan night, was related to all these genres. But it was above all a type of “ramble or spy narrative”, a form that structured its account of the daily life of the city in terms of the adventures its narrator experienced in the course of a pedestrian stroll through its precincts.⁴ The ramble narrative claimed to record these scenes, which were at once sensational and typical of everyday life in the metropolis, as if they had momentarily occurred, at a particular time of day, in precisely located streets.

Like the ramble narrative, the nocturnal picaresque was rendered possible by the fact that, in spite of its rapidly rising population, which leapt by at least 200,000 in the first half of the eighteenth century, London was still not too immense to be circumambulated. The anonymous author of *The Ambulator; or, The Stranger's Companion in a Tour Round London* (1774) measured the metropolis, which included Westminster and Southwark as well as the City itself, as being five miles from east to west and three miles from north to south.⁵ It was still a pedestrian's city, in spite of the rising levels of horse-drawn traffic.



Detail from the frontispiece map to *The Ambulator; or, The Stranger's Companion in a Tour Round London*, 1774.

The nocturnal picaresque was also rendered possible by the constantly flickering play of light and dark characteristic of the metropolis at night in the era of public street lighting initiated in the mid-1680s. For this technology, inconsistent and intermittent as the oil-burning street lamps were, provided the ideal theatrical conditions for staging the city's social contradictions. The sooty, smutty industrial smoke that thickened and blackened the air in the day – especially in the City, where bakers, brewers, glassmakers, potters, and blacksmiths burned quantities of coal in the labyrinthine back streets – intensified these

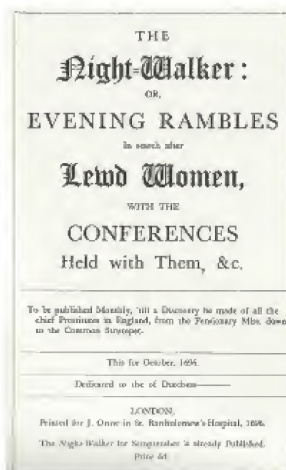
The pioneering example of the nocturnal picaresque was John Dunton's *The Night-Walker: Or, Evening Rambles in Search after Lewd Women, with the Conferences Held with Them*, which appeared in 1696, roughly a decade after public lighting was first introduced in London. An author and bookseller who insisted that "Life is a continued Ramble", Dunton had founded the *Athenian Mercury*, Britain's first successful periodical, in 1691.⁶ A committed Anglican whose father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all been ministers in the Church of England, Dunton published *Proposals for a National Reformation of Manners* in 1694 as part of a moral crusade led by Queen Mary. *The Night-Walker*, another periodical, which declared on the title-page of its October 1696 issue that it was "To be publish'd Monthly, 'till a Discovery be made of all the chief Prostitutes in England, from the Pensionary Miss, down to the Common Strumpet", was a supplementary contribution to Mary II's campaign, albeit one whose crusading ambition was somewhat compromised by its scurrilous content.⁷ It folded in 1697 after eight issues – though not, presumably, because it had successfully recorded the identity of every prostitute in London.

The Night-Walker comprised a series of tracts against whoring and whore-mongering among the metropolitan nobility. It was inspired in part by anxieties about the degeneration of aristocratic bloodlines:

Some of you value your selves as being the Representatives of Ancient and Noble Families; but by the Methods which you take, you will deprive your Posterity of those Pretensions, for you give your Ladies occasion to repay you in your own Coin.

As the Dedication in its first issue indicates, it reserved especially vituperative feelings for clergymen, judges and other hypocritical members of the upper class who, though "mighty Pretenders to impartial Justice, and zealous Asserters of Liberty and Property", had debauched "poor Maids" and exposed both them and the "spurious Issue" they have had by them to "Poverty, Reproach and Punishment". *The Night-Walker* detailed Dunton's attempts to pursue these upright representatives of Society, and the "Suburb Strumpet[s]" with whom they consorted, through the streets of London, which he bemoaned as "a second Sodom".⁸ The periodical's title thus referred both to the activities of the prostitutes and their clients; and to Dunton's identity as a noctambulant.

Dunton's *modus operandi* entailed rambling in places like Chancery Lane, Cheapside, Farringdon, Fleet Street, Holborn, St James's Park or the Strand, generally between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. He pursued this vocation throughout the winter of 1696-97. In addition to the streets, he visited coffee houses, music houses, playhouses, and pleasure gardens in pursuit of his victims. He liked to take his cue from the coded invitations of prostitutes, as when they pretended to stumble into him or drop their handkerchiefs on the pavement. In order to be morally and socially effective, as he saw it, Dunton masqueraded as the corrupt and sinful individuals whose behaviour he was determined to expose. So on his first night's noctambulation, for example, traversing Pall Mall, he propositioned prostitutes, sequestered them in a convenient tavern, and only then, after several glasses, lectured them on their



Facsimile of the title-page to the October edition of *The Night-Walker: Or, Evening Rambles in Search after Lewd Women, with the Conferences Held with Them* – Source: own scan.

licentiousness.

This approach, predictably, did not appeal to all his readers, and in the periodical's fourth issue, in December 1696, he was compelled to respond to critics of the enterprise who complained that he acted "first the part of a Devil to tempt and then the part of a Parson to Preach". In response, he insisted that "The Night-Walker cannot any other way prove the Crime upon each Person with whom he Confers but to sound their Inclinations."⁹

Dunton is a splendid embodiment of the contradictory but symbiotic relationship between puritanical impulses and satanic ones in the nocturnal city. The moral kicks he got from the streets at night cannot be extricated from his sexual kicks. In him the night-watcher and the nightwalker were in an uncomfortably close relationship. As the historian Joachim Schlör remarks of the "missionaries" who patrolled the nineteenth-century city at night, "they too 'penetrate' into the nocturnal city, they too seek the extraordinary experience, they too participate in the cycle of chance encounters, they too see how far they

can go."¹⁰

Middle- and upper-middle class men such as Dunton were of course far freer in their movements at night than women. In the eighteenth century as in the nineteenth, "the suspicion of prostitution fell upon women who were about at night unaccompanied and without justification."¹¹ Picaresque accounts of the streets at night in the eighteenth century are therefore predicated on a male subject, one that is physically mobile and, more often than not, both patrician in his attitude to the poor and patriarchal in his attitude to women.



Detail from the third painting of Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* (1732-33), depicting an orgy underway at a brothel, the Rose Tavern in Covent Garden – Source .

The partial exception to this rule, which in the end it probably reinforces, is *The Midnight-Ramble: or, The Adventures of Two Noble Females: Being a True and Impartial Account of their Late Excursion through the Streets of London and Westminster* (1754). For this intriguing fiction, published by an anonymous author who is presumably male, features two gleeful female protagonists that explore the streets of London at night in disguise.

The narrative opens with an account of the reasons for the heroine's social (and perhaps sexual) frustration. Lady Betty, a virtuous young woman, has been married off to Dorimant, a dissolute nobleman who spends "his Evenings in riotous Mirth and Debauchery at the Taverns; and most commonly passe[s] the Remainder of the Night, in the Arms of some Courtezan at a Bagnio." She befriends Mrs Sprightly, the wife of Dorimant's best friend Ned, and the two women resolve to disguise

themselves as monks in order to monitor their husbands' nocturnal activities in the city. In

prosecuting this plan, they commission their milliner, Mrs Flim, whose name signals that she is adept at idle deception, to bring them “ordinary Silk Gowns, close Capuchins, and black Hats”. And, having taken care “to exhilarate their Spirits with a Bottle of excellent Champain”, the three of them set off in pursuit of the men.

After spying on their husbands at the playhouse, the three women are frustrated in their attempt to follow them by coach to a tavern at Temple Bar because there are so few vehicles on the street. Instead, though it is past 10 p.m., they determine “upon following their Chace on Foot, at all Hazards”.¹² At a spot between Somerset House and the so-called New Church on the Strand (St. Mary le Strand), they meet “four Street-Walkers, that had been long used to tramp those Quarters”. These prostitutes assume that, because of “the Oddness of our Ladies Disguise”, Lady Betty and Mrs Sprightly are “some Strangers of their own Occupation, that were come thither to trespass upon their Walks”. So they jostle and curse their rivals.



An evenings invitation, with a wink from the bagnio (1773), printed for Carington Bowles, Map & Printseller – Source (not openly licensed).

At this point, Mrs Flim intervenes, vociferating with them “in their own Stile of Language”. For her pains, she is punched in the face and has her false teeth pushed “directly down her Throat”. The three women promptly call for the Watch, and “a decrepid old Fellow, with his Staff and Lanthorn” appears. But this “Midnight Perambulator” is “in Fee with the Street-Walkers”, and in any case he too assumes that the women are prostitutes competing for this lucrative spot. An even more violent dispute is only averted when three “rakish Bucks” who have been drinking in a nearby tavern ascertain that Lady Betty and her companions are not of common rank, and draw their swords against the prostitutes. Once the streetwalkers have fled, and since it is a wet night, these men invite the women into the tavern to drink wine and get warm, which they half-reluctantly do.¹³

Later, at Temple Bar, Mrs Flim happens to see Dorimant and Sprightly climbing into a coach bound for Covent Garden with two conspicuous courtesans. The three respectable women, who already seem morally and socially compromised, consequently decide to track it at a distance. They lose sight of it because the coach they have commandeered clips a post, and end up walking to Covent Garden instead. By the time they reach this centre of eighteenth-century London’s nightlife – Vic Gatrell has identified it as “the first of the world’s bohémias” – the men have disappeared.¹⁴ They therefore decide to return to their houses, “once more, obliged to go on foot”. “However,” the author adds, “as the Moon was by this Time rose pretty high, they had Light sufficient to conduct them to their Habitations”.¹⁵ It is a reminder that nighttime illumination was at best limited even in the eighteenth-century West End.

As they amble home, a foreign gentleman hears their footsteps and takes them for prostitutes returning from the bagnio. He accompanies them “for some Streets Length”, though for scarcely innocent or benign reasons, and the result is that, when they run into a constable, he too assumes that they are “three of the bettermost sort of Street-Walkers”. This constable,

who announces that it is “his Duty to keep the Streets clear of People, that had no real Business in them”, threatens to put them in the Roundhouse for the remainder of the night. But the street-smart Mrs Flim bribes him. Finally, resuming their journey home by coach, they pass a couple of men “pretty much in Liquor, staggering along Arm in Arm together”.¹⁶ It is Dorimant and Sprightly. The two men stop the coach, climb into it, and immediately start kissing the two women, whom they have failed to recognise as their wives. They realise their embarrassing error once the coach has deposited them all at the same address.

The pamphlet’s official intention, as its stentorous conclusion indicates, is to serve as “a Warning to the Female Sex, not to trust themselves abroad on any Frolicks, in this lewd and wicked Town, at unseasonable Hours”. But, until this moment, the tale’s moral assignment seems gloriously irrelevant. The women’s adventures are so mischievous, and they prove so successful, that it seems unlikely that the effect on them of “these Adventures of the Night”, as the author disingenuously professes to hope, will be to “prevent their undertaking any more Midnight Rambles, lest they should meet with worse Disasters than they experienced in this.”



The Covent Garden Night Mare (1784), a coloured etching by Thomas Rowlandson, a caricature of Henry Fuseli's The Nightmare – Source .

To the contrary, by the end of the tale, Betty and Mrs Sprightly, like the dubious Mrs Flim from the start, might be said to be “perfectly acquainted with the Streets”, and know “the Ways of the Town”.¹⁷ Certainly, the *Monthly Review* remained unconvinced by the pamphlet’s official moral: it observed in nervous tones that “probably this pretended piece of secret history is altogether fabulous”; and righteously dismissed it as “a low, ill-written tale, bearing the usual marks of a catch penny job”.¹⁸ This response is a clear indication that, in spite of *The Midnight-Ramble’s* claims to rectitude, its account of cross-

dressing female aristocrats who spend the night slumming it in the streets is a little bit bent.

The Midnight-Ramble’s alternative subtitle, given on the first page of the narrative, is “The Adventures of Two Noble Night-Walkers”. The juxtaposition of the adjective “noble” and the noun “night-walker” is surely designed to transmit an almost inadmissible frisson to the reader. This is after all the period when, in the popular imagination as well as in the discourse of Bridewell and other penal institutions, the term “night-walker” became increasingly associated not so much with images of maleficent men as with those of “prostitutes moving along dark streets, gathering on corners, loitering in alleys, touting trade”.¹⁹

The phrase “noble night-walkers”, in the subtitle of *The Midnight-Ramble*, might distinguish its aristocratic protagonists from all the common kinds of street-walker – from the “Jilts, Cracks, Prostitutes, Night-walkers, Whores, She-friends, Kind Women, and others of the Linnen-lifting Tribe” listed in a 1691 broadside against Bartholemew Fair.²⁰ But it makes them seem

morally unreliable at best. It is telling that, in the tale, the “noble females” are not once mistaken for monks, in spite of their costumes, but on at least three occasions are mistaken for prostitutes. In their disguises, they are highly ambiguous figures, at once masculine and feminine, aristocratic and common, virtuous and perfidious.

According to a predictable formula, the author of *The Midnight-Ramble* thus has it both ways: he contrives a daring fantasy of female independence and, at the last minute, presses it into the service of a patriarchal doctrine. As in the “Evening Rambles” described in Dunton’s *Night-Walker*, and other nocturnal picaresques, hedonistic and moralistic impulses cannot be dissociated in *The Midnight-Ramble*. Perhaps the importance of the Protestant ethic to the spirit of capitalism, as the latter materialized in late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London, meant that these impulses were necessarily complicit.

Matthew Beaumont’s most recent book is *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London* (2015). He teaches in the Department of English at UCL, and is a co-director of the UCL Urban Lab. He is also the author of *Utopia Ltd.* (2005) and *The Spectre of Utopia* (2012), and the co-author, with Terry Eagleton, of *The Task of the Critic* (2009). He has edited several essay collections, including *Restless Cities* (2010).

1. See Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: J. and P. Knapton et al., 1755), Vol. 2. The term “noctuary”, as Johnson indicates, seems to have been coined in *The Spectator* in 1714, where a correspondent named “John Shadow” relates one of a “parcel of visions” he has had in his sleep. See *The Spectator* 586 (27 August 1714) and 587 (30 August 1714).
2. Leo Hollis, *The Phoenix: The Men Who Made Modern London* (London: Phoenix, 2009), p. 295.
3. Paul Zweig, *The Adventurer* (London: J.M. Dent, 1974), pp. 103-4.
4. On the ramble or spy narrative, see Alison F. O’Byrne’s excellent PhD thesis, “Walking, Rambling, and Promenading in Eighteenth-Century London: A Literary and Cultural History” (University of York, 2003), pp. 47-56.
5. Anonymous, *The Ambulator; or, The Stranger’s Companion in a Tour Round London* (London: J. Bew, 1774), p. v. Vic Gattrell, in *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Atlantic, 2006), p. 24, estimates that “from west to east you could walk across the metropolis in a couple of hours or so, and from south to north in one”.
6. Quoted in J. Paul Hunter *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: Norton, 1990), p. 102.
7. See Helen Berry, “John Dunton (1659-1732), bookseller,” in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
8. John Dunton, *The Night-Walker: or, Evening Rambles in Search after Lewd Women, with*

the Conferences Held with Them, &c., in Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England 1660-1800, ed. Randolph Trumbach (New York: Garland, 1985), n.p.

9. John Dunton, *The Night-Walker* (December 1696), in *Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England 1660-1800*, ed. Trumbach, n.p.

10. Joachim Schlör, *Nights in the Big City: Paris, Berlin, London, 1840-1930* (London: Reaktion, 1998), p. 260.

11. Ibid., p. 170.

12. Anonymous, *The Midnight-Ramble: or, The Adventures of Two Noble Females: Being a True and Impartial Account of their Late Excursion through the Streets of London and Westminster* (London: B. Dickinson, 1754), pp. 3, 8, 10.

13. Anonymous, *The Midnight-Ramble*, pp. 10-11, 12

14. Vic Gatrell, *The First Bohemians: Life and Art in London's Global Age* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), p. xxii.

15. Anonymous, *The Midnight-Ramble*, p. 18.

16. Ibid., pp. 19, 20, 23.

17. Ibid., pp. 26, 8.

18. "Monthly Catalogue," *The Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal* (April, 1754), Vol. 10, p. 309.

19. Paul Griffiths, "Meanings of Nightwalking in Early Modern England", *The Seventeenth Century* 13: 2 (Autumn, 1998), p. 212.

20. Anonymous, *A Catalogue of Jilts, Cracks, Prostitutes, Night-walkers, Whores, She-friends, Kind Women, and others of the Linnen-lifting Tribe Who are to Be Seen Every Night in the Cloysters in Smithfield, from the Hours of Eight to Eleven, during the Time of the Fair* (London: R.W., 1691), p. 1.

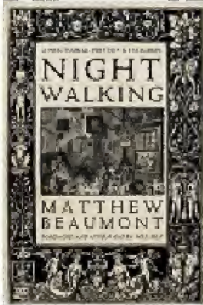
Public Domain Works

- *The Night-Walker: Or, Evening Rambles in Search after Lewd Women, with the Conferences Held with Them* (1696), by John Dunton.
 - The Public Domain Review
- *Description of a City Shower* (1710), by Jonathan Swift.
 - Wikisource
- *Trivia : or, the art of walking the streets of London* (1922 edition), by John Gay.
 - Internet Archive
- *The Ambulator; or, The Stranger's Companion in a Tour Round London* (1774), by Anonymous.

- Internet Archive

Further Reading

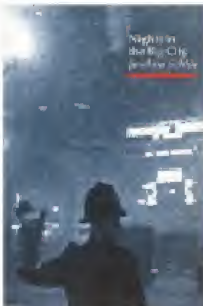
Alison F. O’Byrne, “Walking, Rambling, and Promenading in Eighteenth-Century London: A Literary and Cultural History” (University of York, 2003).



Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London (*Verso Books*, 2015)

by Matthew Beaumont

Beaumont presents an alternative history of London through the writers and thinkers for whom the city at night has served as inspiration – taking in the nocturnal preoccupations of such artists as William Blake, Thomas De Quincey, and Charles Dickens. Foreword by Will Self.



Nights in the Big City: Paris, Berlin, London, 1840-1930 (*Reaktion Books*, 1998)

by Joachim Schlör

Schlör explores how the introduction of public lighting brought changes to the nightlife of Paris, Berlin, and London between 1840-1930.



The First Bohemians: Life and Art in London’s Global Age (*Penguin Global*, 2014)

by Vic Gatrell

Covering artists such as Blake, Hogarth, Rowlandson, Turner and Reynolds, Gatrell explores one of the most productive eras in Britain’s artistic history.

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Oak Island, or Swiss Cheese Island...stop the digging!

yankeeskeptic.com

December 8, 2015 by kittynh

I have to admit to the guilty pleasure of watching woo TV. I enjoyed "Finding Bigfoot" until they just simply kept NOT finding Bigfoot and didn't change their methodology or even try in a location for more than one night. It was obvious to everyone watching what they team was doing wrong. It just became boring to watch them do the same mistakes over and over again. Even Bigfoot hard core believers became angry, lamenting that this team would take over a territory already covered by other more serious Bigfoot groups, film some stuff in night vision, and leave. One night does not make a Bigfoot investigation.

Looking for Bigfoot is often like waiting for paint to dry. The local group here looks at a lot of field cameras, they get up on cold mornings and walk trails looking for footprints, and they discuss new strategy and the possibility that (gasp) there just might not be any Bigfoot locally. All in all it's mundane but dedicated work. Looking for something that might not be there has to be fairly routine and dull if you are doing it right. At least it would seem routine and dull for a TV audiences.



a few more holes and Oak Island may sink! Swiss cheese..... only Oak Island is like most of the NE, if you dig you hit WATER. Period. No need for a dowsing rod.

This is the problem with the TV show that I am currently enjoying, the "Curse of Oak Island". I'm familiar with Oak Island from the articles in Skeptical Inquirer by Joe Nickel. He's even drawn a beautiful map of the island. His articles hint at a Masonic link, but my own feeling is the mystery of Oak Island isn't even that interesting. My own feelings are reflected in this quote from Shakespeare:

It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

The supposed found artifacts are missing, so they can't be viewed today. The story of the original block and tackle found by young boys over a pit has expanded into a complex system of booby traps and tunnels concealing some magnificent ,and perhaps supernatural, treasure.

This makes for great TV. The story started as simply pirate treasure. I wondered why any pirate wanting to conceal treasure wouldn't take down the block and tackle that indicated to the young boys where the treasure was located. This made me think these were really dumb pirates. There is nothing like leaving your tools and rope in plain sight, even though you spend weeks, months, years building this complex treasure hiding area.

I won't go over the many explanations for all the objects supposedly found. Joe Nickel does a much better job explaining all this in his article. The TV show though has to play up everything it can, as it's honestly a pretty boring show without the added drama of the paranormal and mystery (much of which is easily explained by Nickell).

How do you look for and find buried treasure? You dig. Oak Island should be called Swiss Cheese Island. People have been digging and tunneling there for over 200 years. Of course one can always dig some more. Draining a swamp is also an interesting plan. Dumping dye into a hole and seeing where it comes out was also of interest. It didn't come out anywhere, unlike the reported past experiments. This



Oak Island looks like an elephant...



Sometimes it seems more like a white elephant than anything else....more money please!

brings up the question of how many other past stories about searches and exciting finds are also fictional?

To keep the TV show interesting and not just "let's dig a hole!", the Oak Island crew has gone to France, because that's a good way to find treasure in Canada? Every person with a weird theory or method of finding treasure has been invited to be on the program, and their wacky ideas given serious screen time. Ark of the Covenant, why not in Canada in a wet bobby trapped hole that no one had the technology to build at the time?

Weird sonar technology that shows what's buried beneath the ground? Let's hire someone to dig a hole!



Pirates did not have this technology. Really. Even with hundreds of slaves, you need some machinery.

The worst is the narration. If you are told ONCE each program you are told TWICE and THREE TIMES and at any point they can fit it in "LEGEND SAYS 7 MUST DIE BEFORE THE TREASURE CAN BE FOUND! ONE MORE MUST DIE!" What legend? No one ever tells the viewer when this legend started or anything about it. Who said this? It's stated as fact, not fantasy or lore. These new treasure hunters basically have to have one more person die before they can find anything. A ritual sacrifice might be nice, but instead they just keep doing dangerous things. Someone is obviously going to NEED TO DIE. But it's fine as then they can get the treasure.

There is much made of a former treasure hunter who basically just bulldozed and dug up where the original money pit was located. Yes, that's what treasure hunters should do. You dig, and if you don't find anything you go "well there is nothing here." Even a friend who is a firm believer in the money pit as a treasure says "I was obviously recovered long ago." In fact, the original scene the original finders of the money pit came upon could be that of pirates that were recovering their treasure. Why take down the block and tackle if you are recovering your treasure? There is every reason to hide it if you are placing treasure in the ground, none if you are digging it back up!

Still, woo TV is about watching the idiocy and making fun of it. Much like a ball game where you point out bad plays, the Oak Island show is just fun. The problem with this season is they are really seeming to have a hard time keeping it interesting. They've been to Scotland and France. They've had several



How pirates bury treasure.

crazy conspiracy theorists and odd technical people on. They are spending a lot of time this season bringing old pipes and such out of a large hole previously dug, which supposedly has a dead body and box at the bottom. But, watching people haul rusty pipe out of a hole is bad TV. It's how treasure hunting is done, you have to make the hole safe for someone new to go look, but it's boring and tedious. The big excitement was a pipe that slipped out of it's mooring. Wow. Time for the narrator to talk about "ONE MORE MUST DIE!"

Much like Bigfoot now being touted as an alien, because disappearing at will appears to be the only way to explain how he has not been found, Oak Island is now touting the treasure as not only paranormal (cursed) but of such importance that someone built huge booby traps and spent more money and time constructing the hiding place than normal treasure could be

worth. "Let's spend years and have in hundreds of slaves to build a complex system to protect this booty." Pirates didn't work like that. So the only explanation is Ark of the Covenant or alien bodies or the entire ancient library or Alexandria. Who knows?

I'm not saying there isn't something interesting buried on Oak Island. What I am saying is that digging it up is routine and boring. It's hard work. It's commitment and a lot of money, but it's not good TV.

Unless you throw in a narrator that keeps talking about a legend that is never explained, and woo types that muddy the story even more.



Snow knows where to find treasure. I just bought 15 of his books used, and a reading shows me where Sinclair treasure is buried!

I also have a wonderful suggestion for another island that could be the site of the Ark of the Covenant. It's far more plausible, and the only difference between that island and Oak Island is the Oak Island story took off. This other island has a direct proven tie in to the Sinclair family, supposed caretakers of the Ark, and has mysterious buried treasure that has not been found. It's all about which story got more play over the years. My island suggestion is from the once very popular Edward Snow. Reading his books I was "Well heck, that's where it's buried" (with my paranormal woo hat on). I'll do a blog post about another island just begging to be dug up, with a much more believable treasure history than Oak Island.

I just want a cut of the profits, from the TV show if not from the treasure!

I think Bobo is a Shaved Squatch...The Guilty Pleasure of Watching

"Finding Bigfoot" In "big foot"

Keep your hands off my BIGFOOT! In "big foot"

Bigfoot Club Spring Update! Brownies needed! In "big foot"

Category: Bigfoot, Oak Island, travel, Uncategorized | Tags: Curse of Oak Island, Edward Snow, island treasure, Jewell Island Treasure, Joe Nickell, Oak Island, Oak Island mystery, Pirate, pirate treasure, treasure, truth

«

One thought on "Oak Island, or Swiss Cheese Island...stop the digging!"



1. Chip

December 8, 2015 at 11:17 pm

Among the many theories of what may be buried there are manuscripts proving that Roger Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays and- not the Ark of the Covenant- but the Holy Grail! (Where's Indiana Jones when you need him?). I should give you a private review of my slide show on this bizarre place sometime.

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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

Occult Science Course Fails to Locate Brains

San Francisco, June 24—Rushing up to Policeman J. Connell in the City Hall, Sam Sanko announced with hectic tones that some unprincipled thief had gone and stolen his brains. Sanko, who is an Austrian, declared that the robbery had taken place four years ago, and that he had taken a correspondence course in occult science in the hope of regaining the missing parts, but to no avail. Policeman Connell concluded that Sanko had diagnosed his own case very well, and so escorted him to the detention hospital.

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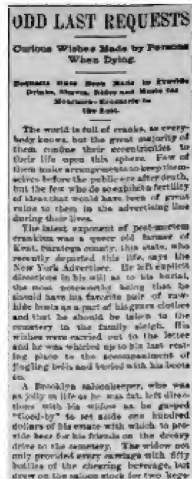
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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

Odd Last Requests: Post-Mortem Crankism (1895)



From *The Wichita Daily Eagle*, Aug. 2, 1895:

"ODD LAST REQUESTS**Curious Wishes Made by Persons When Dying.****Requests Have Been Made to Provide Drinks, Shaves, Rides, and Music for Mourners-Eccentric to the Last.**

The world is full of cranks, as everybody knows, but the great majority of them confine their eccentricities to their life upon this sphere. Few of them make arrangements to keep themselves before the public eye after death, but the few who do so exhibit a fertility of ideas that would have been of great value to them in the advertising line during their lives.

The latest exponent of post-mortem crankism was a queer old farmer of Kent, Saratoga county, this state, who recently departed this life, says the New York Advertiser. He left explicit directions in his will as to his burial, the most noteworthy being that he should have his favorite pair of rawhide boots as a part of his grave clothes and that he should be taken to the cemetery in the family sleigh. His wishes were carried out to the letter and he was whirled up to his last resting place to the accompaniment of jingling bells and buried with his boots on.

A Brooklyn saloonkeeper, who was a jolly in life as he was fat, left directions with his widow as he gasped 'Good-by' to set aside one hundred dollars of his estate with which to provide beer for his friends on the dreary drive to the cemetery. The widow not only provided every carriage with fifty bottles of the cheering beverage, but drew on the saloon stock for two kegsful, which were emptied at the side of the coffin before it was taken from the house.

Another saloonkeeper, a Staten Islander, whose place was a famous resort for fisherman and was himself an ardent angler, often said that he would never lie content in the cold ground. So he made arrangements to have his body cremated and imposed the dying injunction on his friends to see that his ashes were scattered about on the salt water he loved so well, from the head of the statue of Liberty. His wishes were religiously carried out and the funeral party returned to his old saloon and drank 'his health,' as provided as in his will.

Still another saloonkeeper, whose place was well over on the east side of town and who was an inveterate fisherman also, had his ashes committed to the deep. He was a member of a little fishing club that went down in a tug to Romer Shoals every Sunday during the season. He found when on his deathbed that he had but fifty dollars beyond his cremation fees and decided to give the 'boys' a good time with it. He ordered that the money be applied to the hiring and stocking of the tug for the first trip after his death and asked that his ashes be

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taken along and dumped overboard at the shoals while a schooner of beer was drunk to his memory. It was done as he ordered.

A female keeper of a tramps' lodging house in Montreal is about the only woman on record who devised for herself a funeral on other than conventional lines. She left orders that all her lodgers be provided with a shave, a breakfast and a high hat with mourning ribbons, and that they all follow her body to the grave behind two brass bands. The bands were to play the 'Dead March in Saul' on the outgoing trip, but to play, 'The Girl I Left Behind Me' all the way home. The churches attempted to stop the carrying out of her remarkable injunctions, but were unsuccessful, and the old woman was serenaded as per desire.

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The most horrible of all these grotesque provisions was that made by a Virginia colonel, who died about twenty-five years ago, in Amelia county. He demanded, under penalty of cutting off from all his possessions, that his widow have him put in an open coffin in a clump of woods near the house, and leave him there for six weeks. Every morning and evening of that time she was to come to him and brush his hair and whiskers. Luckily the colonel shuffled off his mortal coil in the middle of a very cold winter, so he "kept." His widow was able to carry out his wishes, therefore, and came into all his property.

There are quite a number of cases of religious enthusiasts who have demanded to be buried in a standing position, so as to be all ready for the judgment day, and a negro in South Carolina was buried feet up because he believed the flat earth would be turned upside down at the first blast of Gabriel's trumpet and he wanted to be ready right side up.

People innumerable have had valuables or mementoes buried with them at their request, and a short time ago in France a dying woman had her pet cat killed so that it might be buried in her arms."

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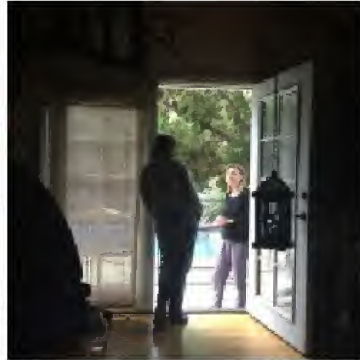
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Meet the non-denominational exorcist to Hollywood's stars

scpr.org

Modern-day, non-denominational exorcist Rachel Stavis helps civilians, stars, studio heads

by Collin Friesen | Off-Ramp December 08, 12:48 PM



Rachel Stavis at the door of the Van Nuys guest house where she performs her exorcisms.

Standing in the backyard of a nice bungalow in Van Nuys, I'm chatting with Rachel Stavis, published horror novelist, the woman who created "Lara Croft – Tomb Raider's" backstory, and professional exorcist.

She's laying out the ground rules for the procedure to come.

"No shoes, no metal at all so no jewelry," she says. "And electronics are at your discretion. We've had a few break."

Rachel leads me into the guest-house, designed, she says, to create a "one-way vortex" so the demons she removes from people can go and never come back. And then she uses a word that makes me think she can also read my mind.

"As crazy as it sounds," she warns, "Everything you hear today is gonna sound insane."

Maybe I should put this out there right now, I'm a rationalist. I honestly don't believe any of this is real – which is why it was so nice of Rachel to let me sit in on an exorcism anyway.

"I don't feel like my job is to prove it to anyone," she says. "[I] feel like people come to this from a skeptical point of view - not just about this but about life, sometimes, because they're afraid."

Rachel says she could always see demons and entities, even as a child.

"I never meant it to be a business," she says. "I've been a writer most of my life and I do pretty well. I think it just sort of happened because once I could do it, people started coming, and people shared with other people. It's actually so many people now I have waiting lists."

The guest house is lit with five hanging lanterns and decorated with a variety of religious iconography, which Rachel says is really just to put clients at ease.

"I've never seen the devil," she tells me. "I don't think Christ compels demons out of the body because some demons probably aren't Christian."



Rachel Stavis in the guest house where she performs exorcisms.

Rachel Stavis in the guest house where she performs exorcisms.

Collin Friesen for KPCC

The client this afternoon is actress Kristina Klebe. You may know her from the 2007 remake of *Halloween*. A victim of evil forces in that film, today Klebe is trying to reverse that trend in her own life.

Klebe is told to lay down on a covered mattress and close her eyes. There's an incantation Rachel gives to summon various masters, teachers, and spirit guides to help her.

"I ask you to protect the body," she says, "but not the entities that do not belong."

Herbs are lit on fire, giving the air an oily, gift shop kind-of feel. Kneeling beside her client, Rachel uses her hands to — as she describes it — pull entities out of Klebe's body, almost like weeding a garden. There are also moments when she inhales the presence and blows it away.

As the exorcism continues, Klebe's breathing becomes more intense. It's clear she is going through some kind of emotional process. Her hands clench and unclench as she starts to cry.

Intense as it is, there's no Hollywood stuff happening, no one throws up, although Rachel says that has happened in the past. The lights don't flicker, nothing falls off the walls, although when the wind gently blew the door shut earlier, Rachel kind-of claimed that as one for her side.

At one point, an ornate dagger is carefully pressed to Klebe's feet then used to cut ethereal ties over the body. A Tibetan gong signals the end.

The whole ceremony takes about an hour, and I'm struck by how intimate it is. It was like being a fly on the wall for a deeply, deeply personal therapy session — much of which I've chosen to leave out.

The end result, according to Klebe, is great.

"I bet you twenty years of therapy wouldn't have release that much abandonment, fear, anger," she said. "The closure felt immediate, it felt like a weight on my back was gone."

All the major religious groups have their own forms of exorcism. Although the Catholic Church recently updated their rules for the procedure. They now take great pains to rule out mental illness in people who say they are possessed.

James Healy is a clinical psychologist who directs a community health center. In an earlier

interview, he told me blaming patients' problems on possession could serve to reinforce a person's delusions. But under the right circumstances, if the patient thinks it works, it just might.

"The placebo effect is another way of saying something is going on in the way people are thinking about their behavior, their problem," Healy said. "That's great if you can find a way to get people to think differently about their problems [...] you're doing therapy at that point. For me, yes, if they're suffering less, then I'm pretty happy with whatever gets them there."

"I guess you could look at it that way," Rachel says when I put that suggestion to her. "But whether you believe in it or not, it's helping people. To me, from what I've seen, I know it's not the placebo effect. But for someone who can't see what I see, that's a good perspective."

The cost for a session runs around \$150. And no, she doesn't list her job as "exorcist" on her tax returns.

"There was a time when this was really embarrassing for me," Rachel says, "but the reality is, one day I decided this is who I am, and if people can't handle that, it's fine."

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Wenebojo and the Wolves

One day Wenebojo saw some people and went up to see who they were. He was surprised to find that they were a pack of wolves. He called them nephews and asked what they were doing. They were hunting, said the Old Wolf, and looking for a place to camp. So they all camped together on the edge of a lake.

Wenebojo was very cold for there were only two logs for the fire, so one of the wolves jumped over the fire and immediately it burned higher. Wenebojo was hungry, so one of the wolves pulled off his moccasin and tossed it to Wenebojo and told him to pull out the sock. Wenebojo threw it back, saying that he didn't eat any stinking socks. The wolf said: "You must be very particular if you don't like this food."

He reached into the sock and pulled out a deer tenderloin then reached in again and brought out some bear fat. Wenebojo's eyes popped. He asked for some of the meat and started to roast it over the fire. Then, imitating the wolf, Wenebojo pulled off his moccasin and threw it at the wolf, saying, "Here, nephew, you must be hungry. Pull my sock out." But there was no sock, only old dry hay that he used to keep his feet warm. The wolf said he didn't eat hay and Wenebojo was ashamed.

The next day the wolves left to go hunting, but the father of the young wolves came along with Wenebojo. As they traveled along, they found an old deer carcass. Old Wolf told Wenebojo to pick it up, but Wenebojo said he didn't want it and kicked it aside. The Wolf picked it up and shook it: it was a nice, tanned deerskin which Wenebojo wanted, so Old Wolf gave it to him. They went on, following the wolves. Wenebojo saw blood and soon they came on the pack, all lying asleep with their bellies full; only the bones were left. Wenebojo was mad because the young wolves were so greedy and had eaten up all the deer. The Old Wolf then woke up the others and told them to pack the deer home. Wenebojo picked up the best bones so he could boil them. When they reached camp, the fire was still burning and Old Wolf told the others to give Wenebojo some meat to cook. One of the wolves came toward Wenebojo belching and looking like he was going to throw up. Another acted the same way and suddenly, out of the mouth of one came a ham and some ribs out of the mouth of another. It is said that wolves have a double stomach, and in this way they can carry meat home, unspoiled, to their pups.

After that Wenebojo didn't have to leave the camp because the wolves hunted for him and kept him supplied with deer, elk and moose. Wenebojo would prepare the meat and was well off indeed. Toward spring the Old Wolf said they would be leaving and that Wenebojo had enough meat to last until summer. One younger wolf said he thought Wenebojo would be lonesome, so he, the best hunter, would stay with him. /p>

All went well until suddenly the evil manidog [spirits] became jealous of Wenebojo and decided they would take his younger brother away. That night Wenebojo dreamed his brother, while hunting a moose, would meet with misfortune. In the morning, he warned the brother not to cross a lake or stream, even a dry stream bed, without laying a stick across it. When Wolf did not return, Wenebojo feared the worst and set out to search for him. At last he came to a stream which was rapidly becoming a large river and he saw tracks of a moose and a wolf. Wenebojo realized that Wolf had been careless and neglected to place a stick across the stream.

Desolate, Wenebojo returned to his wigwam. He wanted to find out how his brother had died, so he started out to find him. When he came to a big tree leaning over a stream that emptied into a lake; a bird was sitting in the tree looking down into the water. Wenebojo asked him what he was looking at. The bird said the evil manidog were going to kill Wenebojo's brother and he was waiting for some of the guts to come floating down the stream so he could eat them.

what they had done. As soon as she told them, a magic thing happened, and the disobedient girls were changed into five black crows which flew away, cawing.

Without the magic pots, the women no longer knew how to make pottery, and that is why the Ojibwe no longer make pots. But the crows live on and in summer you can see them in some tall tree, uttering a mournful caw, caw.

(Adapted from Albert B. Reagan, 1928, "The Magic Pots," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 7[1]:227-28.)

How the Indians Got Maple Sugar

One day Wenebojo was standing under a maple tree. Suddenly it began to rain maple syrup-not sap-right on top of him. Wenebojo got a birchbark tray and held it out to catch the syrup. He said to himself: "This is too easy for the Indians to have the syrup just rain down like this." So he threw the syrup away and decided that before they could have the syrup, the Indians would have to give a feast, offer tobacco, speak to the manido, and put out some birchbark trays.

Nokomis, the grandmother of Wenebojo, showed him how to insert a small piece of wood into each maple tree so the sap could run down into the vessels beneath. When Manabush tested it, it was thick and sweet. He told his grandmother it would never do to give the Indians the syrup without making them work for it. He climbed to the top of one of the maples, scattered rain over all the trees, dissolving the sugar as it flowed into the birchbark vessels. Now the Indians have to cut wood, make vessels, collect the sap and boil it for a long time. If they want the maple syrup, they have to work hard for it.

(Adapted from Robert E. Ritzenthaler and Pat Ritzenthaler, 1983, *The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes*, Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press.)

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This angered Wenebojo, but he slyly told the bird he would paint it if it told him what it knew. The bird said the manido, who was the chief of the water monsters lived on a big island up the stream, but that he and all the others came out to sun themselves on a warm day. So Wenebojo pretended he would paint the bird, but he really wanted to wring its neck. However, the bird ducked and Wenebojo only hit him on the back of the head, ruffling his feathers. This was the Kingfisher and that was how he got his ruffled crest. From now on, Wenebojo told him, the only way he would get his food would be to sit in a tree all day and wait for it.

Then Wenebojo heard a voice speaking to him. It told him to use the claw of the kingfisher for his arrow and, when he was ready to shoot the water monster, not to shoot at the body, but to look for the place where the shadow was and shoot him there because the shadow and the soul were the same thing.

Wenebojo then traveled up the stream until he came to the island where the chief of the water monsters was lying in the sun. He shot into the side of the shadow. The manido rose up and began to pursue Wenebojo who ran with all his might, looking for a mountain. He was also pursued by the water, which kept coming higher and higher. At last, he found a tall pine, high up on a mountain, and climbed it. Still the water continued to rise halfway up the tree.

(Adapted from Robert E. Ritzenthaler and Pat Ritzenthaler, 1983, *The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes*, Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press.)

Creation of the World

Wenebojo, having outwitted the evil manidog by trickery, at last found himself stranded in the pine tree. He crept higher, begging the tree to stretch as tall as it could. Finally the waters stopped just below Wenebojo's nose. He saw lots of animals swimming around and asked them all, in turn, to dive down and bring up a little earth, so that he and they might live. The loon tried, then the otter and the beaver, but all of them were drowned before they could bring back any earth. Finally, the muskrat went down, but he too passed out as he came to the surface.

"Poor little fellow," said Wenebojo, "You tried hard." But he saw the muskrat clutching something in his paw, a few grains of sand and a bit of mud. Wenebojo breathed on the muskrat and restored his life, then he took the mud and rolled it in his hands. Soon he had enough for a small island and he called the other animals to climb out of the water. He sent a huge bird to fly around the island and enlarge it. The bird was gone four days, but Wenebojo said that was not enough and he sent out the eagle to make the land larger. Having created the world, Wenebojo said "Here is where my aunts and uncles and all my relatives can make their home."

Then Wenebojo cut up the body of one of the evil manidog and fed part of it to the woodchuck, who had once saved his life. Into a hollow he put the rest of the food and when some of it turned into oil or fat, Wenebojo told the animals to help themselves. The woodchuck was told to work only in the summertime; in the winter he could rest in a snug den and sleep, and each spring he would have a new coat. Before that, most of the animals had lived on grass and other plants, but now they could eat meat if they wished. The rabbit came and took a little stick with which he touched himself high on the back. The deer and other animals that eat grass all touched themselves on their flanks. Wenebojo told the deer he could eat moss. The bear drank some of the fat, as did the smaller animals who eat meat. All those who sipped the fat were turned into manidog and are the guardian spirits of every Indian who fasts. Wenebojo then named the plants, herbs and roots and instructed the Indians in the use of these plants. Wenebojo's grandmother, Nokomis, also has a lodge somewhere in that land.

(Adapted from Robert E. Ritzenthaler and Pat Ritzenthaler, 1983, *The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes*, Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press.)

Wenebojo Caught in the Moose's Skull

Wenebojo found the skull of the moose and wondered if there was any meat left inside. He looked inside and up the nose, and saw a little piece of meat there. He could crack the moose head open and get the meat, but he didn't do that. Wenebojo wanted that meat badly; so he thought, "I will become a little snake. Then I will be able to get the meat inside there."

So Wenebojo turned into a little snake. He crawled into the moose's skull and started to eat the meat. It was very good and he was enjoying it immensely. But before he finished eating it, Wenebojo changed back into his normal shape, and his head got stuck inside the moose skull. He tried and tried to pull the moose skull off his head, but it hurt him too badly. So he just walked away, thinking that he might be able to get it off another way. Since he was walking and had the moose skull over his head and couldn't see, he didn't get very far before he bumped right into a tree. He touched the tree to see what kind it was, but he couldn't tell. So he asked, "Brother, what kind of a tree are you?" And the tree answered, "I'm a maple tree."

Then Wenebojo said, "You used to stand close to the river. Is there a river close by?" and the tree said, "No, Wenebojo, there's no river near here."

Wenebojo kept on bumping into all kinds of trees and asking them if there was a river near by. All the trees answered No. Finally, Wenebojo came to a tree that he didn't know. He said, "Brother, who are you? What kind of tree are you?" The tree answered, "I'm a cedar."

"A cedar!" Wenebojo said, "You always stand at the edge of the river. Is there any river close by?" And the tree answered, "Yes, there is a river close by, Wenebojo. Just follow along my arm until you get to the river."

So Wenebojo felt along the limb of the tree and then kept on going. There was a big high mountain with a river down below and that's where Wenebojo ended up. He walked along the side of the mountain but his foot slipped, and Wenebojo fell and rolled all the way down to the bottom. When he hit the bottom, the moose skull cracked open and fell apart and he was free of it at last.

(Adapted from Victor Barnouw, 1977, *Wisconsin Chippewa Myths and Tales and Their Relation to Chippewa Life*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.)

Wenebojo and the Cranberries

Wenebojo was walking along one day by the edge of a lake and saw some highbush cranberries lying in the shallow water. He stuck his hand in the water and tried to get them, but he couldn't. He tried over and over again to get those cranberries. Finally, he gave up trying to stick his hand in the water and instead, he tried to grab them with his mouth by sticking his head in the water. That didn't work either. So he dove down into the water. The water was so shallow that the little rocks in the bottom hurt his face. He jumped out of the water and lay down on his back on the shore holding his face. He opened his eyes and there were the berries hanging above him! He had only seen their reflection in the water. But he was so angry that he tore the berries off the tree and didn't eat any, and he walked away.

(Adapted from Victor Barnouw, 1977, *Wisconsin Chippewa Myths and Tales and Their Relation to Chippewa Life*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.)

Wenebojo and the Dancing Geese

Wenebojo often took long journeys. On one of these, he happened to hear singing out on a lake, and when he looked to see who was singing, he thought he saw some people dancing. He went toward them, saying how much he would like to join them. Suddenly, he heard some loud laughter and when he

looked closer, he realized that what he had thought were dancers were really the reeds swaying in the breeze. He realized that the evil manidog had played a trick on him and he was furious.

He went on along the lake and began to get hungry. He saw some geese swimming a little off shore and thought to himself, "Now, I would like some of those geese to eat."

Wenebojo then gathered some balsam boughs in an old dirty blanket he was carrying and, with this on his shoulder, he called to the goslings and offered to teach them some of the songs he was carrying in his bag. They all crowded in to shore, and he told them they must dance just like he did, singing the song he would teach them. He sang "A dance on one leg. Oh my little brothers!"

And as they danced on one leg, they stretched their necks upward. Then Wenebojo sang, "A dance with my eyes closed, Oh my little brothers!"

And Wenebojo danced and stretched, and the little goslings all did as he did, closing their eyes and stretching themselves. Wenebojo then moved among the foolish goslings and began to break their necks. Just then, the Loon, who had been dancing with the other birds, opened his eyes and immediately began to cry "Look out, we are being killed by Wenebojo!"

By this time, Wenebojo had killed several goslings, but he was so angry with the Loon that he kicked him on the small of the back. That is why the Loon has that peculiar curve to his back.

Wenebojo decided to cook his goslings there on the shore of the lake, so he buried them in the sand, putting their legs up so he could find them when they were cooked. Then he built a fire over them and lay down to sleep. He told his buttocks to keep watch for him and, if anyone came, to wake him, for he did not want his goslings stolen.

While Wenebojo slept, some people came around a bend in the lake. They saw the goslings' legs sticking up in the air and thought that Wenebojo had something good to eat. But they saw Wenebojo stir when his buttocks called him and they ducked behind some bushes to hide. Wenebojo did not see anything and scolded his buttocks for waking him unnecessarily. Again the people came out and again the buttocks woke Wenebojo, but since Wenebojo did not see them, he scolded the buttocks once more. The third time the people crept up silently, took the goslings and put the legs back just as they had found them. The buttocks remained silent because they had received a scolding the first two times they had warned Wenebojo.

When Wenebojo awoke, he was very hungry and started to take out his goslings for. But he could find nothing buried in the ashes. He was furious with his buttocks and decided to punish them by standing over the fire until they were scorched. At last, when the buttocks were black and crisp, Wenebojo tried to walk away, but it was so painful that he could scarcely move. So he sat on the top of a steep cliff and slid down, and the sore skin of his buttocks became the lichen. As he walked along, he dragged his bleeding buttocks behind him through some dense shrubs. When he looked back, the shrubs were red from his blood. This, said Wenebojo, will be what the people will use to mix their tobacco-the red willows.

(Adapted from Robert E. Ritzenthaler and Pat Ritzenthaler, 1983, The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes, Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press.)

Windigo

One winter a newly married couple went hunting with the other people. When they moved to the hunting grounds a child was born to them. One day, as they were gazing at him in his cradleboard and talking to him, the child spoke to them. They were very surprised because he was too young to talk. "Where is that manidogisik (Sky Spirit)?" asked the baby. "They say he is very powerful and some day I am going to visit him."

His mother grabbed him and said, "You should not talk about that manido that way."

A few nights later, they fell asleep again with the baby in his cradleboard between them. In the middle of the night the mother awoke and discovered that her baby was gone. She woke her husband and he got up, started a fire and looked all over the wigwam for the baby. They searched the neighbor's wigwam but could not find it. They lit birchbark torches and searched the community looking for tracks. At last they found some tiny tracks leading down to the lake. Halfway down to the lake, they found the cradleboard and they knew then the baby himself had made the tracks, had crawled out of his cradleboard and was headed for the manido. The tracks leading from the cradle down to the lake were large, far bigger than human feet, and the parents realized that their child had turned into a windigo, the terrible ice monster who could eat people. They could see his tracks where he had walked across the lake.

The manidogisik had fifty smaller manidog or little people to protect him. When one of these manidog threw a rock, it was a bolt of lightning. As the windigo approached, the manidog heard him coming and ran out to meet him and began to fight. Finally they knocked him down with a bolt of lightning. The windigo fell dead with a noise like a big tree falling. As he lay there he looked like a big Indian, but when the people started to chop him up, he was a huge block of ice. They melted down the pieces and found, in the middle of the body, a tiny infant about six inches long with a hole in his head where the manidog had hit him. This was the baby who had turned into a windigo. If the manidog had not killed it, the windigo would have eaten up the whole village.

(Adapted from Robert E. Ritzenthaler and Pat Ritzenthaler, 1983, *The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes*, Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press.)

Another Windigo Story

The villagers realized a windigo was coming when they saw a kettle swinging back and forth over the fire. No one was brave enough or strong enough to challenge this ice creature. After they had sent for a wise old grandmother who lived at the edge of the village, the little grandchild, hearing the old woman say she was without power to do anything, asked what was wrong. While the people moaned that they would all die, the little girl asked for two sticks of peeled sumac as long as her arms. She took these home with her while the frightened villagers huddled together.

That night it turned bitterly cold. The child told her grandmother to melt a kettle of tallow over the fire. As the people watched, trees began to crack open and the river froze solid. All this was caused by the windigo, as tall as a white pine tree, coming over the hill.

With a sumac stick gripped in each hand, the little girl ran out to meet him. She had two dogs which ran ahead of her and killed the windigo's dog. But still the windigo came on. The little girl got bigger and bigger until when they met she was as big as the windigo himself. With one sumac stick, she knocked him down and with the other she crushed his skull-the sticks had turned to copper. After she killed the windigo, the little girl swallowed the hot tallow and gradually grew smaller until she was herself again.

Everyone rushed over to the windigo and began to chop him up. He was made of ice, but in the center they found the body of a man with his skull crushed in. The people were very thankful and gave the little girl everything she wanted.

(Adapted from Robert E. Ritzenthaler and Pat Ritzenthaler, 1983, *The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes*, Prospect Heights IL: Waveland Press.)

The Underwater Panther

There once was a big lake where Indians lived all around it. In the middle of the lake, there was a big island of mud, which made it impossible just to paddle straight across. So if someone in one village

wanted to go to the one on the opposite side, they would have to paddle all around the edge of the lake. They stayed away from the island of mud because a bad manido.

One day, one of the villages was holding a dance, and the people from the other side of the lake started out in their canoes, coming around the edge of the lake. Two women who were going started out late, after everyone else had gone. The two women were sisters-in-law and one of them was rather foolish. She was steering the canoe and headed straight across the lake to the island of mud. The other warned her not to do it, but it didn't do any good. The first girl carried a little cedar paddle with her but did not use it for paddling. She carried it everywhere with her. As they got to the middle of the lake, they started to cross the island of mud, and in the center of the mud they saw a hole of clear water. The water was swirling around like a whirlpool, and as they started to cross that bit of open water, a panther came out and twitched his tail across the boat and tried to turn it over. The girl picked up her little cedar paddle and hit the panther's tail with it. As she hit it, she said, "Thunder is striking you." The paddle cut off the panther's tail where she had hit it, and the end dropped into the boat. It was a solid piece of copper about two inches thick. The panther ran away through the mud, and they laughed hard. One girl said, "I guess I scared him. He won't bother us again." When they got across, the girl gave the piece of copper to her father. The copper tail of the underwater panther had magical powers. Everyone wanted a little piece of the tail to carry for luck in hunting and fishing and people would give her father a blanket for a tiny piece of that copper. Her family got rich from the tail of the underwater panther. /p>

(Adapted from Victor Barnouw, 1977, *Wisconsin Chippewa Myths and Tales and Their Relation to Chippewa Life*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.)

The Mink and the Fish

Mink found a live pike on the lake shore. He told the pike, "Pike, the Muskie is calling you all kinds of names." "What is he calling me?" asked Pike. Mink answered, "He says you're wall-eyed." Pike did not like to be called names and said, "Well, he's got teeth like a saw blade and a long plated face. He's not pretty either."

There was a muskie nearby, and Mink told him what Pike had said about him. Mink went back and forth, back and forth, getting Muskie and Pike mad at one another. Finally Pike and Muskie had a big fight and Mink acted as referee. Muskie and Pike ended up killing each other in the fight, so Mink had the last laugh on them.

Mink got a big kettle and boiled and dried the meat. Then he lay down to rest. He was taking life easy. He had the fish eggs, which were his favorite, all together next to him and all he had to do was open his eyes and stick out his tongue out to eat them. Finally he dozed off.

Some Indians came by in their canoes and saw Mink lying there with all those fish. They came ashore and picked up all the fish and put them in their canoes. Where Mink had all the fish eggs right next to him, they put rocks there. Then they went away.

When Mink woke up, he reached with his tongue for the fish eggs, but instead there was only rocks and stones which broke his teeth. He realized they'd played a trick on him and he just walked away.

(Adapted from Victor Barnouw, 1977, *Wisconsin Chippewa Myths and Tales and Their Relation to Chippewa Life*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.)

The Hell-diver and the Spirit of Winter

Every winter, the birds fly south. One winter, a hell-diver (also called a grebe) told all of the other birds that he would stay for the winter to take care of two of his friends who had been injured and couldn't fly south. Both of his friends, a whooping crane and mallard duck, had broken wings. To feed them, he got

fish by diving through a hole in the ice. But the Spirit of Winter got jealous of his success at fishing and froze the water after the hell-diver had dived through his hole below the ice. But the hell-diver swam to shore where there were a lot of reeds and bulrushes. He pulled one of them down through the ice with his bill to make a hole in the ice and so he got out and flew home.

When he got home, he saw that someone was peeking in the door of his wigwam. It was the Spirit of Winter, who did not like him and who was trying to freeze him out. The hell-diver got a big fire going, but it was still cold in the wigwam because the Spirit of Winter was right there making it cold. But the hell-diver tricked the Spirit of Winter by mopping his face with a handkerchief and saying, "Gee, but it's hot in here!" The Spirit of Winter thought the fire was hot enough to melt him, so he ran away.

One day the hell-diver decided to have a feast. He got some wild rice and sent a duck to invite the Spirit of Winter, but it was so cold that the duck froze to death before he got there. Then he sent Partridge with the invitation. She got very cold too, but she dove under the snow to warm up and then went on again. She reached the Spirit of Winter and invited him to the hell-diver's feast.

When the Spirit of Winter came to the feast, it was like a blizzard coming in the door of the wigwam. He had icicles on his nose and face. Hell-diver built the fire higher and higher, and it began to get warm inside the wigwam. The icicles began to melt on the Spirit of Winter's face. He was getting awfully warm, but he liked the wild rice that hell-diver had at his feast and wanted to keep eating.

Hell-diver said, "Whew! It's very warm in here. It must be spring already." The Spirit of Winter got scared and grabbed his blanket and ran out of the wigwam. With his fire, Hell-diver had brought the spring and outside, things were already melting and there were just patches of snow here and there. The Spirit of Winter had a hard time getting back to his home in the north, where there is always snow.

(Adapted from Victor Barnouw, 1977, *Wisconsin Chippewa Myths and Tales and Their Relation to Chippewa Life*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.)

The Story of Redfeather

There once was a little boy called Redfeather who lived with his great-grandfather. His great-grandfather taught him to shoot with his bow and arrows. They lived in a village near a great big frog-meadow. The old grandfather told Redfeather stories about the different ways of creatures.

Springtime came, and in the evenings the old lady frogs would croak and sharpen their knives to butcher the crawfish. That is the noise they make. Every day Redfeather would take his bow and arrow and kill all the frogs he could get and the crawfish too. One day a heron came along and told Redfeather that she would give him her best feather if he would leave the frogs alone. She told him that she had a nest of babies to feed and that he was wasting her food by killing all the frogs and crayfish. Redfeather said, "Ha! I don't want your old dirty feathers. You can keep your feathers and leave me alone. I can do what I want."

So the birds met together to figure out what to do about Redfeather, who was making life difficult for so many of them. Near Redfeather's village there was an island with some large trees on it, and on this island lived a very old and very wise owl. Every evening Redfeather would go out and refuse to come in to bed, and run around and be noisy. The crane and the owl and other birds all complained about him because he scared away all the rabbits and small birds. They said he must be punished. The crane said that she was starving because he killed the frogs and the birds. No one could live in peace.

One evening, the owl perched himself on a tree close to Redfeather's wigwam, and said, "Hoo Hoo!" Redfeather's great-grandfather said to him, "Redfeather, come in, don't you hear that owl calling?" But Redfeather said, "I'll get the biggest arrow and shoot him." Grandfather said, "The owl has large ears and he can put rabbits and other food in them. He might catch you too. You'd better come in and go to

sleep." But Redfeather disobeyed his Grandfather and went out and shot at the owl. He missed, and while he was out looking for the arrow, the owl swooped down and picked him up and stuck him in his ears, and flew off with him. The owl flew across the lake to his island, and up into an old oak tree where the nest of baby owls were.

He put Redfeather down there, and told his babies, "When you get big enough to eat meat, you shall eat Redfeather." The little owls were quite excited at this. Then the owl flew away. The next day, the owl called to the crane and the other birds and said, "When your babies are old enough we'll have a feast of Redfeather. I have him imprisoned in my oak tree." So Redfeather was kept a prisoner, and he cried, but he couldn't get down.

Back in the village, all the Indians knew Redfeather was lost. His great-grandfather asked all the living beings to help him find Redfeather and at last they found him a prisoner in the owl's tree. The spirits told the great-grandfather to give a great feast and ask the owl to return Redfeather. His great-grandfather gave a huge feast, and Redfeather was returned to his great-grandfather. Redfeather also promised that he would never again misuse the food that Wenebojo had made for the birds.

(Adapted from Beatrice Blackwood, 1929, "Tales of the Chippewa Indians," *Folk-Lore* 40[4]:315-44.)

Why the Porcupine has Quills

Long, long ago, the Porcupines had no quills. One day, a Porcupine was out in the woods. A Bear came along and would have eaten Porcupine, but he managed to get up a tree where the Bear couldn't get him.

The next day Porcupine was out again and he went underneath a hawthorn tree, and he noticed how the thorns pricked him. He broke some branches off and put them on his back, then he went into the woods. Along came Bear and he jumped on Porcupine, who just curled himself up. The Bear just left him alone because the thorns pricked him so much.

Wenebojo was watching them. He called to Porcupine and asked "How did you think of that trick?" Porcupine told him that he was in danger when Bear was around. Then Wenebojo took some thorns and peeled the bark off of them until they were all white. Then he got some clay and put it all over Porcupine's back and stuck the thorns in it. Wenebojo used his magic to make it into a proper skin, and told Porcupine come with him into the woods. When they got there, Wenebojo hid behind a tree. Wolf came along and saw Porcupine and jumped on him, but the new quills pricked at him and Wolf ran away. Bear was also afraid of the quills and Porcupine was safe. That is why Porcupines have quills.

(Adapted from G.E. Laidlaw, 1922, "Ojibwe Myths and Tales," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 1[1]:28-38.)

Why the Buffalo has a Hump

Long ago, the Buffalo didn't have any hump. In the summer he would race across the prairies for fun, and the Foxes would run in front of him and tell all the little animals to get out of the way because the Buffalo was coming. They didn't know that Wenebojo was watching them.

So the Buffalo raced across the prairies. There were little birds nesting on the ground and the Buffalo raced over them and tramped their nests. The little birds cried out and told him not to go near their nests, but Buffalo didn't listen to them and ran right over them.

The birds were sad and kept crying about their spoiled nests. Wenebojo heard them and he ran ahead of the Buffalo and Foxes and stopped them. With a stick, he hit the Buffalo on the shoulders, and the Buffalo hung his head and humped up his shoulders because he was afraid that Wenebojo would hit him

with the stick again. But Wenebojo just said "You should be ashamed. You will always have a hump on your shoulder, and always carry your head low because of your shame." The Foxes were also afraid of Wenebojo and ran away and dug holes in the ground where they hid. And Wenebojo said to them "And you, Foxes, you will always live in the cold ground for hurting the birds." And that is why the Buffalo have humps, and why the Foxes have holes in the ground for their homes.

(Adapted from G.E. Laidlaw, 1922, "Ojibwe Myths and Tales," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 1[1]:28-38.)

Wenebojo Made a House for Tortoise

Long ago, when the world was young, there were only two tortoises. They didn't have any shells or houses on their backs as we know them today. They were all soft. In the woods, the strong animals hunt the weaker animals, and Otter planned on eating the Tortoise. One day, Tortoise wanted to go on land to take a walk, but he couldn't run very fast so he looked around to see if any of the other animals were there. As he looked around, he saw Otter coming so Tortoise turned around and crawled under a piece of bark and drew his head, legs, and tail in and Otter didn't see him. When Otter was gone, Tortoise went back to the pond where he lived. But he didn't know that Wenebojo was watching him and saw how had he saved himself from Otter.

One morning Wenebojo was out fishing, he asked Tortoise where there were lots of fish. He said "If you tell me, I'll give you a sturdy house that you can carry on your back." As soon as the Tortoise heard this, he dived down and looked for fish and found a lot and then he came back and told Wenebojo where they were. Wenebojo thanked him and got out of his canoe and asked Tortoise to come up on land with him. There Wenebojo found a piece of bark and put it on the Tortoise's back and got another piece and put it on his stomach. Then they watched for Otter to come. When they saw him coming, Tortoise went out on the path and pretended that he didn't see Otter coming. When Otter saw Tortoise he jumped on him so he could eat him, but Tortoise drew his head, legs, and tail into the new shell and was safe. After Otter went away, Wenebojo told Tortoise that "From this day forth, every Tortoise shall carry his shell, or house, along wherever he goes."

(Adapted from G.E. Laidlaw, 1922, "Ojibwe Myths and Tales," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 1[1]:28-38.)

The Magic Pots

A long time ago, a very old woman lived in an Ojibwe village. Besides the wigwam she lived in, she also had a separate bark house where she kept five beautiful pots on a shelf. These pots were magical and weren't supposed to be used for cooking or anything. Instead, the old woman kept them there so the other women of the village could come look at them and get ideas and go home and make their own pots to use. No one could make pottery without the inspiration of the magic pots and, to keep them safe, no one but the old woman was allowed to touch the pots.

One year, everyone went out at the same time to pick berries, and the old woman went along too. In the village, five little girls were left behind to tend to their chores. They quickly gathered firewood and did all of their other chores and then got together to play. Out of curiosity, the girls went to the old woman's bark house where she kept the magic pots so they could get a look at how beautiful they were. But that wasn't enough for them, and they got the pots down off their shelf and took them outside and played with them, despite the fact that the old woman had forbidden anyone to touch the pots.

As the girls were playing, a wolf appeared. The girls were frightened and got up to run into one of the houses to get away from the wolf. As they ran, one of them fell over the birchbark sheet they used to cover the ground under the pots, and instantly there was a noise like thunder. When the wolf was gone, the girls came out and found that all of the pots had all been shattered into tiny pieces.

When the old woman returned and found out what had happened, she found the five girls and told them

This One Bone Is The Only Skeletal Evidence For Crucifixion In The Ancient World - Forbes

forbes.com



Right: The calcaneus of Yehohanan ben Hagkol, with transfixing nail. Left: A reconstruction of what the foot may have looked like around the time of death. (Image used with kind permission of Joe Zias.)

The Romans practiced crucifixion – literally, “fixed to a cross” – for nearly a millennium. It was a public, painful, and slow form of execution, and used as a way to deter future crimes and humiliate the dying person. Since it was done to thousands of people and involved nails, you’d probably assume we have skeletal evidence of crucifixion. But there’s only one, single bony example of Roman crucifixion, and even that is still heavily debated by experts.

Crucifixion seems to have originated in Persia, but the Romans created the practice as we think of it today, employing either a *crux immissa* (similar to the Christian cross) or a *crux commissa* (a T-shaped cross) made up of an upright post and a crossbar. Generally, the upright post was erected first, and the victim was tied or nailed to the crossbar and then hoisted up. There was usually an inscription nailed above the victim, noting his particular crime, and sometimes victims got a wooden support to sit or stand

on. But Seneca, the Roman philosopher, wrote in 40AD that the process of crucifying someone varied greatly: “I see crosses there, not just of one kind but made in different ways: some have their victims with their head down to the ground, some impale their private parts, others stretch out their arms.”

When nails were involved, they were long and square (about 15cm long and 1cm thick) and were driven into the victim’s wrists or forearms to fix him to the crossbar. Once the crossbar was in place, the feet may be nailed to either side of the upright or crossed. In the first case, nails would have been driven through the heel bones, and in the second case, one nail would have been hammered through the metatarsals in the middle of the foot. To hasten death, the victim sometimes had his legs broken (*crurifragium*); the resulting compound fracture of the shin bones may have resulted in hemorrhage and fat embolisms, not to mention significant pain, causing earlier death.

Like death by guillotine in early modern times, crucifixion was a public act, but unlike the swift action of the guillotine, crucifixion involved a long and painful – literally, excruciating – death. The Roman orator Cicero noted that “of all punishments, it is the most cruel and most terrifying,” and Jewish historian Josephus called it “the most wretched of deaths.” So crucifixion was both a deterrent of further crimes and a humiliation of the dying person, who had to spend the last days of his life naked, in full view of any passersby, until he died of dehydration, asphyxiation, infection, or other causes.

Since the Romans crucified people from at least the 3rd century BC until the emperor Constantine banned the practice in 337 AD out of respect for Jesus and the cross’s potent

symbolism for Christianity, it would follow that archaeological evidence of crucifixion would have been found all over the Empire . And yet only one bioarchaeological example of crucifixion has ever been found.

In 1968, archaeologist Vassilios Tzaferis excavated some tombs in the northeastern section of Jerusalem, at a site called Giv'at ha-Mivtar. Within this rather wealthy 1st century AD Jewish tomb, Tzaferis came across the remains of a man who seemed to have been crucified. His name, according to the inscription on the ossuary, was Yehohanan ben Hagkol. Analysis of the bones by osteologist Nicu Haas showed that Yehohanan was about 24 to 28 years old at the time of his death. He stood roughly 167cm tall, the average for men of this period. His skeleton points to moderate muscular activity, but there was no indication that he was engaged in manual labor.



Drawing of the calcaneus of Yehohanan along with a reconstruction of the fleshed and defleshed foot skeleton. (Public domain image by S. Rubén Betanzo via wikimedia commons.)

Of course, the most interesting feature of Yehohanan's skeleton is his feet. Immediately upon excavation, Tzaferis noticed a 19cm nail that had penetrated the body of the right heel bone before being driven into olive wood so hard that it bent. Because of the impossibility of removing the nail and because the man was buried rather than exposed, we have direct evidence of the practice of crucifixion.

This much is generally agreed upon. Where researchers disagree – pretty significantly – is in the method of crucifixion of Yehohanan.

At the time the bone was discovered, Haas thought that the two heel bones were crossed and fixed by an iron nail. After the bones were conserved, however, Haas noticed new evidence and suggested instead that the feet were next to one another, and one nail was driven into both heels. He also saw fractures to the legs made around the time of death that he interpreted as evidence of *crurifragium* as well as a small scratch near the wrist that was suggestive of a nail being driven through the hand.

A reanalysis of the skeleton, though, by researchers Joe Zias and Eliezer Sekeles in the 1980s took issue with this interpretation. They found that the nail was too short to have penetrated both heel bones and they were unconvinced that the scratch on the wrist bone was related to traumatic injury. More importantly, they showed that the bones were too degraded to conclusively show *crurifragium*.

The debate about Yehohanan's death will likely remain at this stalemate, as the bone material from the Giv'at ha-Mivtar ossuary was reburied after the studies by Haas and by Zias & Sekeles were completed in the mid 1980s. Unless more bone material is found in the future, this is the sole known evidence of crucifixion from an archaeological excavation.

It's not likely that a lot of evidence will be found, though, for a number of reasons:

- Wooden crosses don't survive, as they degraded long ago or were re-used.
- Victims of crucifixion were usually criminals and therefore not formally buried, just exposed or thrown into a river or trash heap. It's difficult to identify these bodies, and scavenging animals would have done further damage to the bones.
- Crucifixion nails were believed to have magical or medicinal properties, so they were often taken from a victim. Without a nail in place, it becomes more difficult to tell crucifixion from animal scavengers' puncture marks.
- For the most part, crucifixion involved soft tissue injuries that can't be seen on bone. Only if a person had nails driven through his bones or was subject to *crurifragium* would there be significant bony evidence of the practice.

In the first century BC, during the revolt of Spartacus, there were reports of over 6,000 crosses with crucified victims on the road from Capua to Rome, and in the first century AD, the Romano-Jewish scholar Josephus reported that up to 500 Jews were crucified every day during the siege of Jerusalem.

The bioarchaeology of crucifixion is therefore a bit of a conundrum: it makes sense that finding evidence may be difficult because of the ravages of time on bones and wooden crosses, but the sheer volume of people killed in this way over centuries should have given us more direct evidence of the practice.

A lot of rather random chance is involved in the creation of the archaeological record – from weather conditions to cultural customs to rodent activity. Even though there are problems involved in the preservation of evidence of crucifixion, the case of Yehohanan ben Hagkol shows that skeletal evidence might some day give us more information about the practice.

Kristina Killgrove is a bioarchaeologist at the University of West Florida. For more osteology news, follow her on Twitter (@DrKillgrove) or like her Facebook page Powered by Osteons.

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One of the most bizarre rituals of the ancient world

By Ian Lloyd Neubauer 3 December 2015

bbc.com



The mysteries of the smoked corpses may never be solved, mummies, Aseki, Papua New Guinea (Credit: Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)

"There were 14 corpses in total, arranged on bamboo scaffolding in life-like positions or curled up like fetuses inside large baskets."

The Anga people live in Papua New Guinea's Aseki District, a fringe highland region so detached from the modern world that

even the regular passing of mist is considered an omen from the spirits. They're also heirs to one of most bizarre rituals of the ancient world: the smoking of their ancestors' corpses.

An extraordinary – and from an outsider's point-of-view, grotesque – form of enshrinement, the smoked corpses of Aseki have captured the imagination of anthropologists, writers and filmmakers for more than 100 years. But few have been able to tell fact from fiction.



The winding road towards the remote Aseki district (Credit: Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)

Mummies in a land of cannibalism

To find out when the practice began – and why the Anga began mummifying their dead in a land where cannibalism used to be the norm – I travelled to Lae, the second largest city in Papua New Guinea. There I met up with Malcolm Gauthier, a guide with off-road motorbike company Niugini Dirt.

Our journey took two days, with an overnight stopover at the former 1930s gold rush town of Bulolo. The further inland we rode, the worse the road got: a bone-jarring juxtaposition of washouts, muddy ruts and river crossings, some of which required dugout canoes to navigate.

When we reached Angapenga, a large village some 250km southwest of Lae, a group of children directed us to a strip of grass overlooking a saw-toothed valley. It's one of dozens of

sites in the Aseki District where smoked corpses can be found, though the exact location of most have been forgotten over time. The mummies of Angapenga are also the most accessible, located a short hike from the road.



Motorbike tours are an alternative way of seeing Papua New Guinea (Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)

After we parked, we were approached by a man named Dickson, who said he was custodian of the site. Speaking in Tok Pisin – a colourful creole of German, English and indigenous Melanesian dialects – he demanded a princely access fee. Gauthier bargained him down to a figure both parties could live with, and we set off with dozens of children in tow on the final stage of our journey: a laborious half-hour

climb through jungle riddled with stinging nettles and spider webs. The track was so steep and overgrown in parts that we found ourselves crawling on all fours. It then disappeared under the canopy and rounded a ridge where a clay wall rose steeply into the air. There, under a small indentation on the cliff, were the smoked corpses of Aseki.

'More macabre than anything I had imagined'

The mummies were more macabre than anything I had imagined. Smearred with red clay, they were in various stages of decomposition, with parched sections of skin and muscle clinging to their skeletons. Some still had clumps of hair and full sets of nails curled in pensive positions. Their facial expressions were cut straight out of a Hollywood scream-fest, with full rows of teeth and eyeballs popping out of their skulls. One of the corpses, a female, had the smoked body of an infant pressed against her chest.



There were 14 Aseki corpses in total (Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)

There were 14 corpses in total, arranged on bamboo scaffolding in life-like positions or curled up like fetuses inside large baskets. Four of the corpses had disintegrated into piles of bones, their skulls peeking out through broken bits of bamboo amid the dirt.

Getting close to the mummies proved to be difficult. There was no flat ground to stand

on and I repeatedly lost my footing. When Gauthier came close to where the bodies lay, he slipped and grabbed hold of the scaffolding, nearly pulling the entire shrine into the jungle below.

One big storm or landslide and they could easily wash away.

I knew from a National Geographic documentary filmed at Koke, another village in Aseki, that the mummies are infrequently carried to villages for restorative work. In fact, Gauthier said he'd seen these mummies on display at the Morobe Show in Lae a decade ago. But I was dumbstruck at the idea of these delicate and priceless artefacts being put in the back of a flatbed truck and driven over 250km of broken roads. Even just sitting here, they were at risk of damage by clumsy tourists, tomb raiders and the elements. One big storm or landslide and they could easily wash away.



Aged skin clings to a skull (Credit: Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)



Detailed fingernails were preserved in the smoke (Credit: Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)

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Aged skin clings to a skull

Stories lost in time and translation

Most of what's known about the mummies is based on hearsay, exaggeration or flights of the imagination. Even the locals I spoke to – Dickson, a pastor named Loland and a schoolteacher named Nimas – seemed to offer different stories about the ritual's past.

The first documented report on the smoked corpses was by British explorer Charles

Higginson in 1907 – seven years prior to the start of WWI. Yet according to Dickson, the mummying practice began during WWI, when the Anga attacked the first group of missionaries to arrive in Aseki. His great-grandfather, one of the corpses we saw under the cliff, was shot dead by the missionaries in self-defence.



The haunting remains of a skull (Credit: Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)



The mummies are delicate and priceless artefacts of Papua New Guinea (Credit: Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)



The dead's characteristics come alive through the preservation method (Credit: Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)

Dickson said the event sparked a series of payback killings that came to an end when the missionaries gifted the natives salt, with which they began embalming their dead. The practice only lasted for a generation, he added, since a second round of missionaries successfully converted the Anga to Christianity.

Loland and Nimas confirmed that the smoke corpse ritual ended in 1949, when missionaries took firm root in Aseki. But unlike Dickson, Loland and Nimas said mummification had been practiced by the Anga for centuries. The bodies were not cured using salt, they explained, but smoked over months in a "spirit haus". They were then covered in red clay to maintain their structural integrity and placed in shrines in the jungle.

Nimas also said that cannibalism was never practiced in this part of Papua New Guinea – a statement that contradicts Higginson's

1907 description of the Anga as bloodthirsty savages who greedily lapped up the entrails of their own kin during the smoking process. But if that was the case, of course, then why didn't the Anga didn't make a meal of Higginson, a lone and defenceless foreigner living in their midst?



Bodies were smoked over months in a "spirit haus" (Credit: Credit: Ian Lloyd Neubauer)

Some secrets, perhaps, are best kept with the dead.

Before departing, I asked Dickson one more question: was it true that embalmers drained the corpses' body fat and used it as cooking oil during the embalming process, as is claimed by Higginson and nearly every report written on the mummies in the century that has elapsed?

Dickson's face showed instant incredulity. "Tok giaman blo wait man (white man's lie)," he replied.

Some secrets, perhaps, are best kept with the dead.

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REVEALED: The OTHER woman found hidden UNDER the iconic Mona Lisa painting

[express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk)

THIS digital recreation of an image found UNDER Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece has thrown new doubts over the real identity of Mona Lisa.

By Zoie O'Brien

PUBLISHED: 12:43, Wed, Dec 9, 2015 | UPDATED: 13:09, Wed, Dec 9, 2015



BBC•GETTY

French scientist Pacal Cotte has said Leonardo's most celebrated work was painted over another similar portrait.

He spent 10 years analysing the artwork and used a multispectral imaging camera to make the discovery, which has led to a digital recreation of the original being made.

Mr Cotte, who was given access to the painting in 2004, says that

an earlier image was hidden by Leonardo underneath his masterpiece.

The scientist said the woman painted underneath does not appear to be Lisa Gherardini, a Florentine silk merchant's wife - the woman widely believed to have inspired the painting.

One acclaimed art historian has claimed the original artwork is of Pacifica Brandano.

Mr Cotte said: "The results shatter many myths and alter our vision of Leonardo's masterpiece forever.

"When I finished the reconstruction of Lisa Gherardini, I was in front of the portrait and she is totally different to Mona Lisa today.

"This is not the same woman."

Art expert Andrew Graham-Dixon said in a BBC Two documentary, *Secrets of the Mona Lisa*, to be screened tonight, the new discovery was the original.

He said the digital recreation was a "perfect match for the historical record".

The documentary claims the subject is Pacifica, who was the mistress of Leonardo's patron Giuliano de Lorenzi de Medici.

Historians believe Leonardo worked on Mona Lisa between 1503 and 1517, first in Florence



IG



Getty Images

and later in France.

Mr Cotte used his own Layer Amplification Method on the masterpiece.

It works by "projecting a series of intense lights" onto the painting, Mr Cotte said.

A camera then takes measurements of the lights' reflections and from those



Getty Images

measurements, Mr Cotte said he is able to reconstruct what has happened between the layers of the paint.



Getty Images

He said: "We can now analyse exactly what is happening inside the layers of the paint and we can peel like an onion all the layers of the painting.

"We can reconstruct all the chronology of the creation of the painting."

However not everyone is convinced about the original.

Martin Kemp, Emeritus Professor of the History of Art at the University of Oxford, said: "They [Cotte's images] are ingenious in showing what Leonardo may have been thinking about.

"But the idea that there is that picture as it were hiding underneath the surface is untenable.

"I do not think there are these discreet stages which represent different portraits. I see it as

more or less a continuous process of evolution. I am absolutely convinced that the Mona Lisa is Lisa."

A reconstruction shows another image of a sitter looking off to the side.

The Louvre Museum has declined to comment on his claims because it "was not part of the scientific team".

Instead of the famous, direct gaze of the painting which hangs in the Louvre Museum in Paris, the image of the sitter also shows no trace of her enigmatic smile, which has intrigued art lovers for more than 500 years.

But Mr Cotte's claims are controversial and have divided opinion among Leonardo experts.

Will Gompertz, Arts Editor for the BBC said he was "sceptical".

He added: "It's perfectly common for an artist to overpaint an image as it is for a client who's commissioned that artist to ask for changes.

"So it's not surprising that there are those underpaintings on the Mona Lisa."

17 Comments

cdbNEW3 days ago

Well, the original was certainly a woman and the one we now can see is certainly a man; but, hey, we know the taste of leonardo

Miss Floribunda RoseNEW2 days ago

Leonardo, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Il Sodoma.....all shared similar tastes. Lawks! They were all at it!

BirdmaniwNEW3 days ago

Wonder who it was stolen from? Find out and return it.

quizqueenNEW4 days ago

Wasn't the Mona Lisa stolen some years ago? When it was 'found', was it replaced with a fake?

Miss Floribunda RoseNEW3 days ago

No.

PiranhamanNEW3 days ago

in August 1911, the Mona Lisa was stolen off the walls of the Louvre in Paris.

notaracistNEW4 days ago

I wasn't unusual for a master to reuse a canvass

NormanMilesNEW4 days ago

I bet it is a paint by numbers diagram,with instructions....

trismusNEW4 days ago

Is the story just to get Charlie's old nag in the paper.

Peter DowNEW4 days ago

Condoleezza Mona Lisa

youtu.be/KApOoCaQHv4

SidSideboardNEW4 days ago

This 'story' was reported about 25 years ago. DE grubbing around again. Why is there a picture of Moose Head accompanying this 'story' ?

tonydartfordNEW4 days ago

Leonardo De Vinci's work was to prolific to be from one man.

Miss Floribunda RoseNEW4 days ago

No it wasn't, bird-brain. Relatively few of his paintings exist, several were left unfinished, and he also abandoned several projects and commissions.

tonydartfordNEW3 days ago

He was an artist, medic, inventor, engineer draughtsman etc So he was prolific and art was only a part of him. And when I said prolific I meant all his work not just his paintings.

Miss Floribunda RoseNEW3 days ago

Oh, I see.

trev57NEW4 days ago

I once walked through the corridors of the Louvre passing some incredible works of art, I then walked into a room where a single picture was displayed behind bullet proof glass, I stood and looked and looked, but how ever hard I looked it was just another picture, perhaps it's my eye sight I don't really know, but I just didn't seem to be getting it.

Miss Floribunda RoseNEW4 days ago

Perhaps you lack a well developed aesthetic sense. Just sayin'.....

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Title:	0136-Our Voices-Legend of the Giant Skunk
Bird Number:	1013
Recorder:	Louis Bird
Date Recorded:	
Transcriber:	Kathy Mallett
Date Transcribed:	March 6, 2003
Language:	English
Culture:	Cree (Omushkego)
Transcript:	Proof

Ok, what I am going to do is, I am going, I am going to censor the giant skunk, I am going to tell that first because there is two major part to it, there's what's on in the first part and then the giant skunk is eliminated and then on their own the other animals fits, fits on, and then finally even that part is not the end. About the incubinx, it start out with a mixture of a human, its very hard to understand when the human existence but in the giant skunk story there is no human, now lets experience about this thing.

Once we listen to these ones, then we'll be able to, then we will be able to experience the true value of the legends, storytelling.

Ok, I am going to start with the giant skunk, censored, and these legends can start anywhere there is no ridged restriction or anything. How do you begin a legend? In our language its very simple and its very very automatic, so I could say, we could start off with the weasel.

Weasel was hunting by himself in the winter. He had travelled far during the day. Finally towards evening it was a time for him to turn towards home, home ward direction. Actually weasel didn't travel straight as he always does, always following the creek and looking for the places where he can find the mice, what he is after. Sometimes he follows the creek to find small minnows or even fish. A big fish of which he eat for his diet. So, therefore his his trail, a hunting trail is not straight, it wonders off into the creeks and sometimes across to the next creek. And then always maintaining his home ward direction.

Finally, it was one of those days that he has been busy hunting, which was not very successful. He was not, he didn't hunt very well, he was not lucky. He had this meal very lightly yes, but he would rather take something home. So he carried his his catch on his back, and it was towards evening that he finally decided to to head home. Taking a short cut exactly where his home is located. So he took off towards home, days get shorter. Finally the sun set, just after the sun set, just before it gets dusk, he saw a trail that was ahead of him.

He knows its a large animal trail, a track. So in his training he was told always to be careful which track that he is going to cross. To make certain first that it doesn't belong to the giant skunk. So his thought hit him right away. So he decided to go sneak around, look at the trail from distance, until finally he can he was very certain it was the giant skunk. And its such a day that I have to cross his track, because the law is there, that if anyone wants to survive no one should ever cross giant skunks trail or the track.

So being that he was already tired and some distance to cover yet. And its already sunset he decided to do the next best thing. Rather than go back go back, and go way back of his track because it is so far distance. He knows that the skunk doesn't go wonder off very far from his den. He could have done that easily just to look from the side, and follow where it ends, because of his tired condition he just didn't want to fool around. So he decided to go under it, hoping that giant skunk is not going to find out that he has crossed his trail. Anyway, down he goes under the snow, crawl right down to the grassy bottom where there is less snow. But as he get right under the track, usually the snow when you step on the snow, you crush it down to the ground, and it freezes hard right to the ground.

In that case he encountered the hard crush rocks, rock I mean, snow not rock, right close to the ground, it's a hard frozen snow. I wanted to say to express the Cree version of this condition, that's way I said rock, I said the rock type hard snow. So anyway, he went right under, and he dig causing him to dig part of this hard crush snow. Hoping that you know that the giant skunk is not going to find out anyway.

So we know that the weasel is very small, and small body and he will dig on, measure about one inch hole, right to the bottom of the ground bottom of the snow. So the giant skunk shouldn't able to detect anything at all, that's what he believes. So he crawled under the snow quite a ways, after he passed this crush hard snow, and then come up come up to the surface far enough where his trail is not going to be seen by a giant skunk. So off he went forgetting all this leaving this behind.

So he made it home later after dusk. He got there, and was very tired gave his, his catch to his wife and she prepared the food. And its so happen the next day he travels around again, and didn't go very far. But there were times when the man of male group of animals sat together and told stories about their hunting days. And it was this few days maybe, it was only the next day, not even in the evening, it was during the day that he mentioned he has crossed the trail of the giant skunk.

So he was just sort of asking the person he says, "Do you think it's possible the skunk would detect my crossing his trail under the snow?" So the the news travelled fast in this small, a small connective society of animals. So they carried the word across each other, and the say, "Well the weasel has crossed the skunks trail, and he is here with us, and surly the giant skunk is going to follow his trail, and he is going to follow ours, and surly we are going to be dead."

So, this mistake that the weasel have done spread across the communities of other animals. So they come to answer that the wise animals. So we just have to make a leave, we just have to move away. Hopefully the giant skunk will take him a little while to find out. But they are so certain by this time he must be making an effort to locate the trail, who ever crossed his trail. Because the animals that made certain that they would never cross his trail. Because they they avoided the area where this giant skunk was living, in the winter especially, it wasn't to bad in the summer, but in the wintertime.

So the weasel was sort of put on a hot seat. And he was told, "Why did you have to do that, you know it's easy for him to detect your trail in the winter. It would be all right if it was water, and wet ground he may have not found it, never the less it is too late now, we

must move away". So the decision of the elders, and wise animals decided to leave the area to avoid being slaughtered or whatever.

As the story goes, the giant skunk has a very powerful shamanistic powers. And which surpasses all the animals, and that's what they fear of him. Because there is nothing they can do to him, because he was the most feared animal there is. And there there was no way they could avoid it, they know for sure that he will find out eventually. He will track down the the intruder what ever he wants to control him.

The idea is that who ever cross his trail deserved to die, and that will be his meal, but we know that the skunk doesn't eat animals that that often, because he is more like an, more like an insect eater and vegetarian. But there are times, especially in the wintertimes, if he could get a hold of animals or anything, he will surely eat. And that's way it was dangerous to cross his trail in the wintertime. But anyway, after the decision was made by the by the other animals, they say, "We might as well just take off, we will head west to the mountains somewhere."

So they know the giant skunk is not the fastest animal there is, and besides that, they know he travels very slow. And usually prefer to travel on the smooth ground. Smooth ground and not the rough terrain. And so they decided to head west. Where there is mountain rocks and everything a lot of bad lands, so they took off. The following day some of them during the night took off. The whole family left the area, and as they go west they begin to be joined by all sorts of animals, squirrels, otters, they didn't mention about beaver, but they mention all the four legged animals who travel on the on the surface, in the winter time. Sure enough there was a packed trail, even the caribous jointed in and everything, wolverine, wolves, lynx, and all that stuff, and they all heading one direction.

And out of these groups there was a wolverine, was looked upon as a one of the wise person. And the caribous were looked upon as the most energetic animals who could break trail ahead of the herd. A herd of wild animals, and the smaller ones behind, even a mice even the mice family moved around, weasels, squirrels and everything that travels on wintertime. I think they even have a eagle, and a raven any any other kind of animals are in danger, so they said.

So it says, they move west, they approached the mountains, and high and valleys, rugged grounds. In hoping that whenever the giant skunk pass from the trail, that he would surely follow, and that he won't give up, regardless of his speed. The only hope was that, they would tire, they would tire him out eventually, and probably too weak to follow them, that was the hope for survival.

Now leaving off the group of animals who are heading out. Here was giant skunk in his in his home. At the moment of the evening, the weasel have touched his trail. The giant skunk was sitting on this home comfortably with his wife his family, and all of a sudden he feel by his shaman power that he's been touched, as if he touching his body, and even making him expression of it, he says "Yum somebody is touching my trail." And the wife of course is there and aware of what is happening. So he begin to wonder who would be crossing my trail, this time of the day.

So that means he surely has a meal coming up. If he can catch the animal who cross

his trail, because he's been trespassing just like somebody is asking to be killed to be eaten. As with this general term, but he says, "I will go look for it tomorrow", because it was too late already. He told his wife "I will look for it." So the skunk finally went to bed, but as usual the animals and humans always in those days, always being taught to leave early in the morning before sunrise to go hunting.

So what he did was he left before sunrise in the morning, and he went to back track his trail where he travels yesterday. Sure enough, just about at the end of his trail he saw, he went around he didn't see no track nothing what so ever, no trail. The only thing he saw was just a track of this spruce grouse, and some owl marks and those things like that.

And then he went home. He just couldn't understand how could he have made a mistake, because he is very sensitive, he's radar system is very keen. A radar system I mean his shamanistic power never fails him. Who ever crosses his tracks usually touch him right way, so that's why he wondered, why did I think that I, my trail has been crossed. So in in that afternoon as he was coming home, he didn't go very far so he was mystified, and he told his wife, why it was amazing, how could I be wrong.

So in those days the animals use to have a special ritual. A special way of doing things to reject or to reject their mistakes. So what he usually do is giant skunk, was he use to eat a certain kind of food, a certain way things that is cooked, so he would eat. And think that's re-taking his trail as if he would see it again. So he tried, I think he tried first, a snake, garden snake sort of thing. A small snake anyway, a small snake which has been smoked dried and cooked. So he asked his wife, "Can you cook that for me?", it used to work. So she went ahead and busy cooked this snake skin, smoke snake. So he he sat down to eat, and begin to back track in his mind.

He went out again, thought he know he went to check all over, couldn't find a thing. So he returned again in the afternoon and told his wife, "It's strange I still couldn't find the track, what could it be?" He knows it's not a large animal he knows it has to be under ground so he just couldn't find it. So he asked his wife, "Could you cook me that, a bull frog smoke, a smoked bull frog that you cooked for me that you prepared for me last fall." So she says, "Sure." So she went out and bring in a smoked frog hide its skin mostly, so she begin to cook. This kind of eating was supposedly a ritual for this purpose only he is the only one who would eat it. So she offered the the food and the meal to him and he begin to eat.

As he eat, sits as if he's not there. But he actually travelling on his track. As if he's looking back at it again, finally he pinpointed the area, pinpointed in his mind where is it all. So he went there, same day. That was the next day after the weasel crossed his track. So he went there and he knows how to look for it this time. After he finished eating he went back out the same day the same afternoon. Sure enough he went to pick out the spot and he had he had his axe, they say or his knife that he uses.

So he walked back and forth and cut snow on his track. And look at it, as he does, sure enough he found a small hole right at the bottom of his track, bottom of the ground just a small hole. And here was the hole which was made by this small animal. He follows it, and follows it, and finally come up to the surface, and this was the weasel. He says, "Ha,

Ha, I know I know there was.” So he says “That was yesterday they shouldn't be too far, shouldn't be too far.”

But he didn't go that day. That evening he went home tell his wife, and tomorrow he is going to follow. So it's more like a ritual he didn't really need all that. But because he's feared because he wants to full fill his status he has to do it. But he only expected to find weasel family at the end fortunately is wasn't so. The next day when he left he found the trail again. Followed it and finally found the campsite which has been left. And the weasel family has left.

And he follows it another camp site was there. And there was another animals jointed in, and by the end of the day there was a whole group of animals travelling towards westerly direction. There are found out. They have found that he would follow them. And he spend a night. The next day the same thing happened, by this time there was just the track was so wide, and packed that he was just travelling there, very easily towards west. And days passed and he kept following. He was getting weaker, he was getting hungry, because of all this travelling. But the animals seems to just, just to gain distance.

Finally after many many days, finally he reached the area where you could see the mountains of the west, seems to be hanging cloud. He knows they are going to go there. Follows them and follows them. Finally he reached the mountain region, began to climb up and down up again to the valleys. Sometimes he was to weak, to even have some cramps in his legs and he has to rest. So he knows those other animals must have the same problem. Especially the animals who have the smaller smaller young ones. So finally the the skunk is not the one who gives up easy because to full fill his status, I mean to maintain his status as the most fearsome animal he has to go.

Finally the animals, also now we begun the story of the animals. As soon as the animals reach the mountain region they begin to feel safe. Because they know by this time the skunk will be having a difficult time, and he will be tired just like them. And hopefully by this time, they may give up. He may turn back. But those who were in charge of this expedition or refuge, what ever this they have a radar system also. So the the old animals who have required the radar system scan the area towards the back track. And they notice they can feel, they can feel the skunk was not far. Actually it was, actually gaining ground this time, because he's big not as small as them.

Therefore they decided that they must look a place where they make a stand against the giant skunk. So the wise, wise animals they say, “We have to make a stand, we can't just exhaust ourselves and let him pick us up one by one.” We must stand together while we still have a strength, and we must choose the right place to make a stand. So it was agreed by all animals, there were caribous, there were moose, there were many others. Except that there was only one, one extraordinary animal that was not around, this was a bob cat. And usually this the bob cat was very,very big. At that time there was a by freak of nature, that he was more like a giant bob cat. So they called him a large cat. In our language it's mishipiishiiw something to describe like a lion the king of the cats.

So in our territory the bob cat was considered to be the same level and status as a lion in Africa. So therefore, that's way they decided to stop and dismount and reach it.

Because bob cats usually stayed in there, but seems the bob cat do not travel far. And always hang around in the tree section. They found such a place, they found mountain valleys where there are lots of trees. And also long large narrow lake at the end of it which has an natural open water, because the spring water it doesn't freeze during the winter. So they stopped here, and surveyed the area. And those who were ahead of them they said, "This will be all right." So the wolverine and all the wise animals they say, "Ye this is the good place." They talked about what they would need, and how they would attack the giant skunk.

So they decided where the outlet of the lake ,where there's a tall pine trees long leaning trees. Would be a good place where our giant brother to jump from, to jump at the giant skunk. This is their plan the attacking plan. And that's someone has to because the giant skunk is a gentlemen behaviour also he need a coaxing he won't just attack. They know that, so someone has to be nutty enough, or something to make a wise crack that would cause the giant skunk to be irritated and get him to attack. It's something like a gentlemen of England. When they are insulted their honor they would throw down their white gloves on the ground, and make a date for a for the duel. And that's sort of thing, that nature.

So therefore they have planned everything, all they do now is just wait for him. So they know he is going to come from their trail. So they go to the west which is exactly where the length, the length of the lake is. They know he is going to step on the ice. And in order to find out that he's coming closer, somebody has to be on guard all the time, in in a daytime and also at nighttime.

What they did, was they they place some animals along the lake, with the hole on the ice.

So whenever the giant skunk is walking they would see this this water moving up and down. So this is one, that is one of the way the the animals understand there are some enemies or threat is nearby. When they live under the ice or on top of the ice. So this is the system they used. So they agreed everybody has to be ready. And at the same time they hunt and maintain their life, life has to go on the same even if there's a danger of being killed or extinguished all all of them. So it's a life and death stand they make.

Sure enough the next day there was there was a yell says, "The giant skunk is on the ice." Can't see him yet, because the the length of the lake is so far, all you can see both sides is the mountain in between you don't see anything. But they know he's on the ice now. So everybody prepared, they send the children away as far as they can. Made camp out there and let them wait, and only the male animals stay around.

Sure enough time passes, and in the middle of the lake appears a speck, a dark object. And there he was giant skunk heading towards the end of the lake. It took time because as we know the skunk doesn't jump and hop but rather wiggle it's way around. They know that its going to take time before he gets there, so they plan and they plan and they plan and everything.

So they have sent a message to their brother bob cat to be ready when he's called to be on to be on the scene. He had agreed but true to his nature, leaders where they are living

he didn't want to come here for nothing he says, "Call me when you need me." So the animals, foxes and all that wolf and wolverines and caribous and what have you on the land. They are all gathered together all the schemes world and all the plans are in place and everything, proper timing and everything.

Finally the giant skunk came too close sure threatening and seeing, but it's a life and death decision that they have made. But the skunk also have decided that he's not going to go down without fighting. He has to keep his status that's the most important. So he came, sure enough as usual he he greeted the animals respectively as he does. And so is the rest at least at the beginning, but one remark he made was that, "I was just wondering" he says, "Why in the heck do you have to make such a terrible travel trail?" He was now propping or trying to create an argument to give an excuse to attack, but one of them all ready had plans to answer, so it's a wolverine.

So the wolverine says, "Well we had seen the track of the, there is a name there is a nasty name about somebody who has a cheek, pouch cheek, something like that pouch cheek. Well they have seen the tracks of the pouch cheek that's why the trail is so difficult. So the skunk says, "Who is this pouch cheek, who is this pouch cheek that you mention?". And then wolverine says, "It's a giant skunk, a giant skunk that's what the pouch cheek is".

And that's all the giant skunk needed. Then he slowly turned around ready to aim and let go of his killing (long pause, L.Bird made a small sound with his mouth). And at the same time all the animals just jump in their position. And then wolverine was instructed that he must jump at the skunk right in the rear end where this spray is going to come from, that was his job, because wolverine has a very sharp and powerful teeth. So everybody knows that he will be the only sort of a person who will be able to hold off the stink or the spray, otherwise everybody will go blind and die.

So it happens so quickly. The wolverine has to jump and close to the opening. And in the meantime, the meantime they have to jump at the skunk to try to try to kill it. So once the wolverine jump in on the position or defense purpose all the rest of the animals jumped on the giant skunk.

Those who have teeth, and those who are able to use any equipment or or any tools begin to attack the giant skunk, but without much damage. But in the mean time the wolverine has to hang on in all his might to hold off the giant skunk. And it was this time nobody can even do any damage to the giant skunk. Nobody explained exactly how big the giant skunk was, must of been bigger than a moose or anything. So finally they said, "We can't do, can't do any damage much", even the wolverine managed to say a few words from his position and he says, "Come on do something I can't hold off this for ever."

So they said, finally they decide. "We should call on our brother giant lynx, bob cat". Even the ordinary lynx couldn't do much damage. So they call this a giant bob cat to come and assist him. But true to this bob cat behaviour it took a long time to come across the lake where he was living. Half way through he has to sit down, because he has cramps on his legs. Finally he approach and he says, "Why in the heck do you have to bother me in my afternoon nap."

So they said, "We have this giant skunk here, see, we can't do anything with it, and

if he lets go of this guy then that's it we have it." So finally he says, "See", so the bob cat climbed on the big tree where they had chosen and then they he jumped on the giant skunk neck, he began to work on him with his teeth and his claws everything he has." Took a long time, finally the effect took place on the giant skunk. Plus the other wounds that he received from the minor animals. He began to sink on his front paws and the rear ends finally he feel limp and he died.

So the other animals won, they cheered they screamed they jumped. But the wolverine was still in there hanging on, finally they said, "He's dead you can let go." But due to the pressure was there naturally, when the wolverine pulled away some of the spray goes right into his face through his garment and everything. And he turned blind he couldn't see and he was suffering just screaming, and just twisting in the ground, and couldn't do anything. So he beg and he says, "Take me into the water hole so I can wash my eyes." They said, "No, no, you can't do that because you're going to pollute the water." And he was suffering, finally the suffering begin to subside a little bit, but he still couldn't see.

So the animal's wives they say, "We can't allow you to wash to wash you at the lake because if you do the water is going to be polluted, and the humans who will come to existence later may not be able to survive and so is the rest of us." So the wolverine says, "What am I going to do?", "Well", they said, "You should go and wash your body into the large body of water which existed towards where we came from so that is due east." So he says, so he said, "Point me towards it." So they said "Yes, we will point you towards it and keep travelling until you hit the water and then wash." And then they pointed at him towards east and then instructed him what ever you come into a stumble into, ask to it where its located to keep your faith up, so you don't give up. It will tell you exactly were we are, how far the water is and that will keep you going so it happens.

Now we're going back to the scene of the of the slaughter there lay the giant skunk, and wolverine have left all ready. So the wise animals talked about it and all that stuff, and then they said, "We must cut him to pieces." The usual thing was that to burn it or whatever it is or cook it or eat it. So what they decided to do is that whatever left of it, if they don't eat it all, and then the rest of it they have to cut it in pieces to the size of the skunk today. So they cut it that small piece, small piece of each, each part of this animal and then they scatter it all over the land. Around them, they carried it here and there where they usually a skunk make a den, and then they said, "This is where he is going to inhabitant the land and this is the size he is going to be when the humans emerge on the land." And then live, and they went home happy after that. So that is why today, we have the size of the skunk we have, and this is why today we have the skunk to live and wonder only in summer time. That's why the skunk hibernates partially in the winter to be safe from the humans, and for all the rest of the animals that will be required for the human kind.

That's the end of part one of the Giant Skunk. The rest of it we will pick up the key character would be here our friend wolverine who has been pointed to the east to go wash his body. So that he will wash in the in the large body of water which is already which is already, suitable for the purpose and that will be saved for the human being, who much later

they will have a fresh water. So the story ends, that is one example about the legends.

This is the story which related to the idea of evolution. And this story has been very old. There's nothing in there that tells us that there was any human existence.

And also we can go back and look at the story in the beginning. That the giant skunk have a shaman power that he was able to detect anyone that crosses his trail, whether if he's at home or at any other place. And that he has to have a certain kind of a meal to put in, to to refresh his memory or to re to re transe his detection power. Seems the way he ate helped him to increase his awareness his keenness. And that all other animals are naturally afraid of skunks, it's spray, it's pain full to any animal. It tells us all those things, most dramatically is that they prepared for the human to become to exist later. That is the very part of this legend, and thank you for listening. We shall talk about things on the other side, probably, an incubix, which also talks about coming of the human times. Thank you.

Pakistan court filing asks British queen to return Koh-i-Noor diamond

yahoo.com

By Mubasher Bukhari December 3, 2015 8:07 AM

LAHORE, Pakistan (Reuters) - A Pakistani attorney said on Thursday he has filed a court petition seeking the return of the famed Koh-i-Noor diamond Britain forced India to hand over in colonial times.

Once the largest known diamond in the world, the 105-carat Koh-i-Noor is one of the Crown Jewels. It is set in a crown last worn by the late mother of Queen Elizabeth II during her coronation.

Attorney Jawaid Iqbal Jafree filed the court petition naming Queen Elizabeth II as a respondent on Wednesday in the eastern city of Lahore. The application asks that Britain hand back the diamond, now on display in the Tower of London.

India also has made regular requests for the jewel's return, saying the diamond is an integral part of the country's history and culture.

Britain's then colonial governor-general of India arranged for the huge diamond to be presented to Queen Victoria in 1850, during British colonial rule.

Majority-Hindu India and majority-Muslim Pakistan became two different countries in 1947 when they became independent of Britain.

Jafree told Reuters that the Koh-i-Noor rightly belonged to Pakistan's Punjab province and was "forcibly and under duress" taken by the British from the local ruler at the time.

"Now it should be returned to Pakistan," he said.

"Her Majesty the Queen will rise in the highest public interest ... with facilitating honest disposal and transferring the possession of the Koh-i-Noor diamond which was illegally taken," Jafree said in his petition, which the court has not yet admitted for hearing.

"Koh-i-Noor was not legitimately acquired. Grabbing and snatching it was a private, illegal act which is justified by no law."

If Kate Middleton, the wife of Prince William, who is second in line to the throne, eventually becomes queen consort, she will don the crown holding the diamond on

official occasions.

In the last half century, Jafree has written over 786 letters to Queen Elizabeth and various Pakistani officials asking for the diamond's return.

His latest high court petition notes that his letters have never been acknowledged, except once by Queen Elizabeth through her principal private secretary.

During a visit to India in 2010, British Prime Minister David Cameron said in an interview on Indian television that the diamond would stay in London.

"What tends to happen with these questions is that if you say yes to one, then you would suddenly find the British Museum empty," he said.

(Writing by Mehreen Zahra-Malik; Editing by Kay Johnson)

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Paradox at the heart of mathematics makes physics problem unanswerable

09 December 2015

nature.com

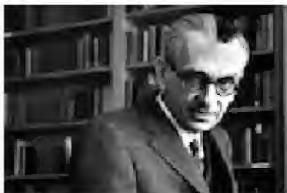


L: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy, R: Photoshot Kurt Gödel (left) demonstrated that some mathematical statements are undecidable; Alan Turing (right) connected that proof to unresolvable algorithms in computer science.

A logical paradox at the heart of mathematics and computer science turns out to have implications for the real world, making a basic question about matter fundamentally unanswerable.

In 1931, Austrian-born mathematician Kurt Gödel shook the academic world when he announced that some statements are 'undecidable', meaning that it is impossible to prove them either true or false. Three researchers have now found that the same principle makes it impossible to calculate an

important property of a material — the gaps between the lowest energy levels of its electrons — from an idealized model of its atoms.



Gödel's enigmatic foundations of maths put to music

The result also raises the possibility that a related problem in particle physics — which has a US\$1-million prize attached to it — could be similarly unsolvable, says Toby Cubitt, a quantum-information theorist at University College London and one of the authors of the study.

The finding, published on 9 December in *Nature*¹, and in a longer, 140-page version on the arXiv preprint server², is "genuinely shocking, and probably a big surprise for almost everybody working on condensed-matter theory", says Christian Gogolin, a quantum information theorist at the Institute of Photonic Sciences in Barcelona, Spain.

From logic to physics

Gödel's finding was first connected to the physical world in 1936, by British mathematician Alan Turing. "Turing thought more clearly about the relationship between physics and logic than Gödel did," says Rebecca Goldstein, a US author who has written a biography of Gödel³.

Turing reformulated Gödel's result in terms of algorithms executed by an idealized computer that can read or write one bit at a time. He showed that there are some algorithms that are undecidable by such a 'Turing machine': that is, it's impossible to tell whether the machine could complete the calculations in a finite amount of time. And there is no general test to see whether any particular algorithm is undecidable. The same restrictions apply to real

computers, since any such devices are mathematically equivalent to a Turing machine.



The biggest mystery in mathematics: Shinichi Mochizuki and the impenetrable proof

Since the 1990s, theoretical physicists have tried to embody Turing's work in idealized models of physical phenomena. But "the undecidable questions that they spawned did not directly correspond to concrete problems that physicists are interested in", says Markus Müller, a theoretical physicist at Western University in London, Canada, who published one such model with Gogolin and another collaborator in 2012⁵.

"I think it's fair to say that ours is the first undecidability result for a major physics problem that people would really try to solve," says Cubitt.

Spectral gap

Cubitt and his collaborators focused on calculating the 'spectral gap': the gap between the lowest energy level that electrons can occupy in a material, and the next one up. This determines some of a material's basic properties. In some materials, for example, lowering the temperature causes the gap to close, which leads the material to become a superconductor.

The team started with a theoretical model of a material: an infinite 2D crystal lattice of atoms. The quantum states of the atoms in the lattice embody a Turing machine, containing the information for each step of a computation to find the material's spectral gap.

Cubitt and his colleagues showed that for an infinite lattice, it is impossible to know whether the computation ends, so that the question of whether the gap exists remains undecidable.



Maths whizz solves a master's riddle

For a finite chunk of 2D lattice, however, the computation always ends in a finite time, leading to a definite answer. At first sight, therefore, the result would seem to have little relation to the real world. Real materials are always finite, and their properties can be measured experimentally or simulated by computer.

But the undecidability 'at infinity' means that even if the spectral gap is known for a certain finite-size lattice, it could change abruptly — from gapless to gapped or vice versa — when the size increases, even by just a single extra atom. And because it is "provably impossible" to predict when — or if — it will do so, Cubitt says, it will be difficult to

draw general conclusions from experiments or simulations.

Million-dollar question

Cubitt says that the team ultimately wants to study a related problem in particle physics called the Yang–Mills mass-gap problem, which the Clay Mathematics Institute in Peterborough, New Hampshire, has named one of its Millennium Prize Problems. The institute is offering \$1

million to anyone who is able to solve it.

The mass-gap problem relates to the observation that the particles that carry the weak and strong nuclear force have mass. This is also why the weak and strong nuclear forces have limited range, unlike gravity and electromagnetism, and why quarks are only found as part of composite particles such as protons or neutrons, never in isolation. The problem is that there is no rigorous mathematical theory which explains why the force-carriers have mass, when photons, the carriers of the electromagnetic force, are massless.

Cubitt hopes that eventually, his team's methods and ideas will show that the Yang–Mills mass-gap problem is undecidable. But at the moment it doesn't seem obvious how to do it, he says. "We're a long way from winning the \$1 million."

Journal name:

Nature

DOI:

doi:10.1038/nature.2015.18983

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Show context

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Author details

- **Davide Castelvecchi**

2 comments **Subscribe to comments**

1. Nicholas DeWaal • 2015-12-10 09:40 PM

So if I'm not mistaken, this means that the "unanswerable question" is undecidable or independent from that the assumed axioms of quantum mechanics. That just means that there is room to add another axiom to quantum mechanics that would make the question answerable. To find the axiom(s), we need to consider what possible set of additional axioms could make answering that question possible, and then conduct experiments (e.g. observing properties of various synthetic materials) that would provide the most information to restrict the possible set of axioms.

2. Martín Ceresa • 2015-12-10 11:28 AM

Hello! There is an error here: "The same restrictions apply to real computers, since any such devices are mathematically equivalent to a Turing machine." In fact real computers are a less 'powerfull' entity, a Turing machine have something like infinite memory while a real computer have finite memory (and disk, etc).

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November 30, 2015 • 6 Comments

National Geographic has a special issue out featuring "Strange But True: Secrets of the Supernatural Revealed":



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Strange But True: Secrets of the Supernatural Revealed features the most wildly popular, incredibly weird, and totally true stories that only National Geographic could discover. Ripped from the headlines of National Geographic Daily News, these often weird, sometimes miraculous stories are presented with both engaging text and lively images.

Some highlights include:

- Incredible flying sharks
- Mind-controlling fungus that turn ants into zombies
- The potent "corpse flower" discovered in Madagascar

Hmm. None of those highlights are SUPERNatural. They are all natural. What are they trying to do with this issue?



Bigfoot_cover_1024x1024

Also on newsstands is a special edition of Newsweek featuring Bigfoot.

Why would *Newsweek* do a "Collector's Edition" on Bigfoot? What is the news on Bigfoot? There isn't any. There is, as usual, a lot of baseless speculation, wishful thinking, and failures to obtain decent evidence. Note the cover blurb says they include info on DNA techniques (yet, neither hyped DNA study of the past few years found evidence for

Bigfoot), and migration and speech patterns. Since a Bigfoot has never been found, no one can actually say how they talk or migrate. To suggest so is absurd.

Newsweek's blurb about this issue is just as silly:

Get in on the hunt with *Newsweek* as we uncover the truth behind one of the greatest and most controversial legends on earth—Bigfoot! Witness the sites and read the eyewitness accounts that include none other than our 26th president, Teddy Roosevelt! Learn the difference between Bigfoot, a Sasquatch, a yeti and the Abominable Snowman. Find out when and where Sasquatch sightings have occurred and review the facts and fiction from a panel of experts, including Survivorman Les Stroud, who have been tracking Bigfoot for decades. This 100-page, illustrated, special collector's edition might just have you start your own journey to find Bigfoot!

If it's the "truth" then they should say that there is nothing new – that will disappoint readers. The Teddy Roosevelt bit? Oh my gosh, I can't believe they conflated his telling of a legendary tall tale with an eyewitness account! That's some very poor journalism.

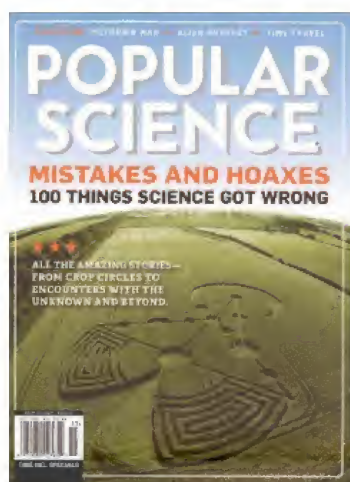
Wait, since when is Les Stroud an "expert" on Bigfoot?! Someone needs to look up the word "expert".

This publication sounds like something to line the bottom of the bird cage and I'm only on the cover page!

The online stock of this issue is sold out, maybe because most of us would be too embarrassed to buy this in real life, or, Bigfoot is really popular. Coverage by *Newsweek* elevates this topic in importance.

Both these publications have been seen in the "wild" on newsstands. They do exist!

With the *NatGeo* issue, it could be another case of a hyped cover that does not accurately reflect the content. Last September, *Popular Science* produced a similar "special" issue on paranormal topics called *Mistakes and Hoaxes – 100 Things Science Got Wrong*. I saw it on the newsstand and did buy it (for \$13.99). It included topics like the moon landing hoax, pyramids on the moon, dowsing, chemtrails, crop circles, Bigfoot, Loch Ness monster, and the Atacama alien – even though none of these subjects are given credence by science. While it did include some skeptical comments, it gave these topics recognition that they do not deserve.



screen-shot-2015-09-05-at-7-47-01-pm

Imagine my surprise when I found myself quoted in it.

The majority of the *PopSci* content was not related to the cover theme presented. It seemed like a way to sensationalize and sell a pile of copies to impulse-buyers fascinated by "mysteries". It had little to do with what "science got wrong". I doubt many of those who purchased it because of the promising cover would become regular subscribers to the publication.

Why did these reputable publications pander to that audience, and, at the same time, annoy their core readership with the lower fare? It's similar to Discovery Channel and Animal Planet (and other "informational" channels) airing abysmally bad shows on exorcisms, mermaids, megalodon and Bigfoot. That didn't work out well; these publications might want to note that such moves can cost them readership in the long run.

The *Popular Science* edition was not well done. Any competent writer could have looked up this basic info and presented it in the various pieces. It was not worth the money. The *NatGeo* special sells for \$13.99 and the Bigfoot special issue for \$9.99. I'll not be buying either but will perhaps try to find it in the library to peruse.

Have you read either of these new sensationalistic issues? Let us know and what you thought. Meanwhile, I've knocked down these three publications a notch for pandering to ignorance and mystery-mongering, even if only on the cover.

idoubtit

Tags:

6 comments for "On newsstands now... paranormal pandering from previously reputable sources"

1. Bill T.

November 30, 2015 at 12:34 PM

Particularly broadcast NG has been about hyperbole ("biggest", "oldest", "deadliest", ...) with little substantive content for a long time. That the print version is following was predictable.

2. sgtdenver

November 30, 2015 at 1:22 PM

The book "Bigfoot: The Life and Times of a Legend" by Joshua Blu Buhs convinced me that Bigfoot doesn't exist.

3. Anomalous

November 30, 2015 at 3:06 PM

Not that surprising. Rupert Murdoch just purchased National Geographic and his first action was to fire its best editors, writers, photographers and artists. Expect more 'sciencey' sensational garbage and less science or geography from here on: more UFOs, paranormal crap and conspiracies; less AGW, science facts or research.

Nat Geo – NOW with a political agenda!

I've canceled my subscription and all gift subscriptions to Natl Geo. Some institutions should not be messed with.

• Richard Murray

November 30, 2015 at 7:07 PM

@Anomalous: Looking through the National Geographic store, it would appear Rupert Murdoch must be a time traveller...

National Geographic has been doing it for years, though. People act like Rupert Murdoch issued a command from on high. However a spot check of the publication dates of books in their store dealing with natural remedies and the like are over the last 5 years.

All these have the National Geographic logo and / or name on the front cover;

Complete Guide to Natural Home Remedies 2014

Foods For Health 2014

Life Is Your Best Medicine 2012

Desk Reference to Nature's Medicine 2006

Healthy At Home 2014 (Stay Well Without Prescriptions)

March 2015 was amusing on the news stand, though.

<https://goo.gl/photos/JTDtX4h5z9udRjiJ7>

4. Ian

November 30, 2015 at 3:47 PM

Why some people get so bent out of shape when their favorite publication or a "respected" institution does a story on a paranormal topic is beyond me. Why do you care? Paranormal, ghosts, Bigfoot or whatever are part of our culture whether one is interested in the subject or not. For all anyone knows the Newsweek story may actually help some people understand the phenomena a little more clearly; if it is presented without bias it may actually be educational. And if it does generate some much needed revenue for the publication, That would be a good thing right?

• Christine Rose

November 30, 2015 at 4:25 PM

Well, if it were presented without bias it would explain how Bigfoot is a cultural phenomenon and how the evidence is overwhelmingly against it existing. Publications like Skeptical Inquirer do this all the time, and they are favored and respected and educational. Any presentation that makes it look like there is a real chance a Bigfoot exists is biased.

Some people are rather attached to the idea of truth in general, and truth in the media, at least in some identifiable subset of the media, in particular. You seem to have some sort of emotional attachment to these stories. Others have emotional attachment to reality. And keep in mind, many, many people are harmed by these things. There are Bigfoot tour guides who take money from people. Do those people have an accurate idea of how poor the evidence for Bigfeet are? And of course medical silliness kills people at regular intervals.

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Petersburg wakes up to mysterious loud booming noise

by Angela Denning

November 23, 2015 2:09 pm



This map shows the five reports of people seeing a meteor early Saturday morning. Photo/amsmeteors.org

Petersburg was abuzz with talk of a big bang early Saturday morning. Some people believe it was lightning and thunder while others think it might have been a meteor.

On the sidewalks, at the stores, at the bars, people have been talking about a loud sound they heard around 2:30 a.m. Saturday. Most have never heard anything like it before.

Life-long Petersburg resident Devren Bennett was asleep at home in Tlingit and Haida Housing Subdivision. Like many others, he was jolted awake.

"I woke up from dead sleep to what sounded like a jet sitting on top of our house with the engine wound up all the way," Bennett said. "First thought was a landslide of some sort but there's no mountains around my house that would cause anything like that, otherwise I had no idea."

"So did you actually feel something?" I asked him.

"Absolutely, you could definitely feel the vibrations," said Bennett.

Rebecca Anderson heard the loud boom in Severson Subdivision.

"I remember waking up and wondering why there was a jet at that early hour of the morning," Anderson said. "And then within less than a second I realized it was not a jet. My next thought was lightning and as the sound progressed I realized it didn't sound like any thunder I heard before. It sounded like repetitive blasts, really rapid blasts. I was actually concerned we were under some sort of attack or the military was shooting at somebody for a second and as I listened it just sounded like, pop-pop-pop-pop-pop. You could hear it coming and going. And then after the sound stopped making the blasting, I could still hear it echoing through the mountains."

Another resident, Chris Lopez, was watching TV at his home on Lumber Street.

"It sounded like a jet or something taking off and then I felt the rumble and I thought, 'oh wow, thunder'," Lopez said. "I got up to go to the bathroom, came back and I looked around, I was looking for lightning, nothing happened so I laid back down and just getting ready to go back to sleep and then all of a sudden this great big bright flash through the shutters appeared and it was really bright, I mean really bright... and then a few seconds later, the rumbling or what sounded like thunder anyway. I sat up and watched and looked out. There was no rain so I don't know what it was but I just assumed it was thunder because that's what it sounded like to me. But it was very close and very loud."

Some were more certain about what it was. Five people in Petersburg reported seeing a meteor to the American Meteor Society.

One of them was 66-year-old John Havrilek. He was in his bedroom which has a wall of windows looking out at Petersburg Creek.

"This flash woke me up and I looked out and saw this brilliant streak flash across the sky," Havrilek said.

"And within seconds after the streak, this huge explosion that reverberated through the mountains for a good thirty, forty, fifty seconds. It just seems like it went on forever. And the flash and the streak are something I had never seen before. It was like a gigantic shooting star."

Havrilek is from the Midwest where he experienced a lot of lighting and thunder. He said it was nothing like that.

It could have been a meteor, according to Travis Rector, a professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Alaska Anchorage. He doesn't have any data about the event to say one way or another but it is possible.

"You can have an object that if it's large enough and breaks up as it's passing overhead, you could see a flash of light and also possibly hear it," Rector said.

He said usually if you see a streak of light like a shooting star it's a meteor the size of dust or a grain of sand. If you hear a boom from it then it could be the size of a small to medium sized rock that could fit in your hand. It could also be space junk but those move slower than meteors.

In any case, Rector said, it likely burned up before hitting the ground and was not tracked because it's so small.

While accounts of meteors were mounting, the Forecast Center in Juneau was also seeing something unusual: a large cluster of lightning strikes Southeast of the village of Kake on Kupreanof Island.

Kimberly Vaughan is a Forecaster with the Juneau Forecast Office.

"With that many lightning strikes there very well could have been lighting in cloud which would then have caused the lightning which people may have seen or the traveling of light that they may have been seeing," said Vaughan. "Because this column was probably thousands of feet high and so very well could have been, even with the mountains right there, very well visible from people in Petersburg."

She said this type of weather is not common for Southeast Alaska.

So, maybe it was lighting and thunder or maybe it was a meteor. Or maybe it was both happening at the same time. With believers on both sides of the issue, it might just remain a mystery.

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Kitsune Lore: don't listen to Ondore's lies!

Velvet:

ok, the above is a typo. don't listen to kishimoto's lies, and there-in, the majority of narutards lies (not the mob.) i am a kitsune enthusiast, teacher of trickster mythology, and research kitsune (have for quite a few years now) and recently because of naruto, all sort of misconceptions have been popping up.

frankly, they appaul and offend me. someone who finds kitsune (foxes) very important, and intimately know their lore. so to help remedy some of this i wanted to put up this thread to help a little.

don't reply until finished.

=====

Section 1: introduction

To start with the basics, the word "Kitsune" is Japanese for fox, but the word its self has undergone a few changes since it was first developed. It started with the pronunciation of kitsu-ne (kitsoo-neh) which was formed from the words "kitsu" which was the sound a fox made, and "Ne" which signifies an affectionate feeling. The word Kitsune was also written "kitsu-ne" which means "come and sleep" as well as being written as "ki-tsune" which means "come always". Later on however, the pronunciation was changed to simply to "Kitsune" (kit-soon), which is what is familiar to most of us and is most commonly recognized. This stands to say that the words "Kitsune" and "fox" are interchangeable.

The Kitsune is a commonly recognized figure all across Eastern Asia (North Korea, South Korea, Japan, and India in particular), it is respected, sacred and sometimes even feared creature all throughout these areas, sometimes even going so far as to place the Kitsune on a ranking so high as messengers of a god. (More on this later)

The different regions however showed Kitsune in a slightly different manner then each other. With the India area describing Kitsune more as ancient men, tricksters much like the coyote. The orient, most notably Japan, commonly show the Kitsune to be either female or very effeminate, regardless of gender however, the Kitsune were known for their unrivalled trickery, and would often play pranks on people simply for their amusement or because they were bored.

Section 2: Kitsune society

There are a great many different types of Kitsune in mythology, there are types aligned to the different elements (earth, wind, fire, lighting, water, to name a few) as well as some Kitsune who are aligned with emotions such as anger, sadness, happiness, and the like. The different alignments they share often affect their personalities and goals, water Kitsune, also known as river Kitsune, are often concerned greatly with the water around them.

This is because they are linked to that water, and its well being is, in essence, the well

being of the Kitsune. If the river were to dry up, then the river Kitsune linked to it would most likely die as well.

On the other hand; Lighting Kitsune, or storm Kitsune as they are more commonly known, are swift and fleeting in their lives. coming and going in a very short periods of time and existing solely for the moment, they are not concerned with anything in their brief life because like the lighting they are linked to, they live for the moment in which they live, and do as they please until they fade.

It should be noted however, that Kitsune that are affiliated with certain things, retain some traits of the thing they are linked to (Kitsune linked to emotion tend to appear where an excess of the chosen emotion is present, and will have the traits associated with that emotion), and without the presence of their chosen link, will either fade away (in the case of Kitsune linked to emotions and fleeting elements such as fire or lighting) or will simply die (in the case of the aforementioned river Kitsune and earth Kitsune).

However, aside from the linked Kitsune; there are also Kitsune that associate with more "immaterial" factions, or to clarify, the roles of guardian, wanderer, or warrior. Those three classes are the most commonly known of the many different roles Kitsune may take.

The three most common Kitsune are the "Myobu", the "Nogitsune", and the "Reiko". These are the most popular and most commonly depicted Kitsune when it comes to the Roles they play and the way they live.

====The Myobu====

Myobu are Kitsune in service to Inari, the God of foxes. These are generally the "guardian" Kitsune mentioned before. Although during certain circumstances, they may choose the path of the warrior or wanderer, Myobu act as guardians to the many various shrines to Inari and its followers and priests.

Myobu are affiliated with the element of light, or more properly classified "celestial" element. Because they are followers and subjects of, as said above, the God Inari, they by default are exposed to copious amounts of celestial forces and thus it becomes their affiliation.(1)

Another responsibility of the myobu is to protect travelers, followers of Inari, and others from the "evil" Kitsune, who would play tricks upon hapless humans for their own amusement and under no control of Inari.

Myobu, while typically colored white, also can be any other color even black, however the white myobu are the "purest" of the Kitsune.

===The Nogitsune===

The Nogitsune are the "wild" breed of Kitsune. Affiliated with neither Inari nor filled with malicious intent. These are the more "neutral" factor of Kitsune in the fox realm; these are what you would consider the pedestrian of the Kitsune race.

Often they are brown or red coated, as those are the most common of the Nogitsune. They value freedom and cunning over all. Often they will help a random traveler simply because they wish to, and just as often they will terrorize someone because they are bored.

Nogitsune are often considered wanderers, they are by nature the classification with the most freedom to choose their own actions. This ability is highly coveted by Kitsune kind, as above all else they value freedom.

side note: in some cultures, because the nogitsune is not affiliated with either inari or particularly malicious in their pleasures, they are described as "disgraced kitsune" who have lost their tails and are trying to get them back.

this interpretation is generally that of a myobu who was punished by inari. however, this is not the only view portrayed of them.

===The Reiko===

The reiko are the supposed "evil" genus of Kitsune. These are the fox spirits who have indulged in their darker desires and live only to appease themselves (2). These Kitsune are affiliated with an element referred to as "void", and generally have a black coat of fur.

Reiko are the darker of the Kitsune, while retaining the natural curiosity and wish for amusement as the others of its breed, Reiko are generally described much differently. Being vindictive towards people, and sometimes downright hostile to them, Reiko are very much the antagonists of the various lore.

While they do not officially bear any grudge against myobu, the Reiko and myobu Kitsune classes do not get along well. Myobu see Reiko as the evil of existence and a stain upon Kitsune honor. The Reiko dislikes the myobu's "holier than thou" attitude, and takes every chance they get to hinder them.

===Tails hierarchy===

The tails ranking system in Kitsune mythology can mean a number of things. Some believe that tails are gained every 1000 years, others believe they are gained by knowledge, and others still think tails are gained as a show of power.

What we do know for certain however, is that there are 11 classes of power that are known in the tail hierarchy.

*note: the term "hierarchy" is a bit of a misnomer, as they don't particularly have one. but this gives you an idea of their different "stages" so to speak

1 tail – ichibi. A single tailed Kitsune, it has very little to no actual power or standing. Generally these are kits or Kitsune under extreme punishment for breaking an oath.

2 tails – nibi. A two tailed Kitsune, the next level and for all intensive purposes, the first of three "ascension" stages. This tail marks the beginning of a Kitsune's immortal life. It also dictates their elemental or emotional alignment.

3 tails – sanbi. The three tailed Kitsune simply gains higher standing and refined abilities.

4 tails – yonbi. Four tailed Kitsune are gifted extraordinarily with the power of illusions and trickery. It is at this stage they begin hiding their tails under illusions, so as to avoid hunters and young lords seeking fame for killing a tailed Kitsune.

5 tails – gobi. At five tails, the Kitsune gains co-ercion over an element or emotion of their alignment. A water Kitsune would be able to manipulate water around it to an extent to aid or amuse it's self, a Kitsune aligned with sadness could cause the people around it to become

depressed for periods of time.

6 tails – rokubi. At six tails their illusions gain the power to enter reality for a brief period of time. For example, if a rokubi created an illusion of a waterfall, then it could make that waterfall exist in reality instead of simply an illusion until it's power faded.

7 tails – shichibi. At seven tails, Kitsune gain a form of immortality. They can no longer be killed by physical means, and only by exorcising their souls can they be destroyed or banished.

8 tails – hachibi. This stage simply refines all abilities up to this point and stores the power and life energy of the Kitsune in preparation for the next step.

9 tails – Kyuubi. The second "ascension" stage, upon reaching the ninth tail Kitsune are gifted with complete control of reality and the elements around them. Immortal to all but the most devout monks and priests, these are the demi-god Kitsune.

10 tails – juubi. The final ascension, very few Kitsune, maybe 1 of every 7000, ever make it to this stage. Upon achieving the tenth tail, the Kitsune is put on par with power and ranking as Inari, the god of foxes. By this time however, they have become wise beyond even their immense age and find it more amusing to watch the younglings rather than become active themselves.

11th rank – tera kaa no Kitsune. This is the final rank and is unachievable by any Kitsune other than the one there already. Translated, it means "fox spirit of the mother earth", she is quite literally the most powerful existence in the Kitsune realm. She uses Inari, the first Kitsune to achieve juubi, as her "prophet" so to speak.

While Inari is the god of foxes and of various other things, Tera Kaa no Kitsune is, put simply, the goddess of all existence and reality.

Section 3: common traits

Now naturally, all Kitsune are much like humans in the way that they have unique personalities and traits within each of them. However, it is important to note the many traits that are found in some way within each and every Kitsune.

The following is a list of several of these traits, and a brief explanation of them.

1. Trickery – all Kitsune enjoy pranking or playing tricks on one another. Often a Kitsune will give good fortune to a human when it has seen that human perform an impressive feat of trickery upon another.
2. Seduction – seduction is something all Kitsune excel at. They are naturally very exotic, and because of how they are aligned to both various elements and emotions, as well as skilled with illusions of the mind, the Kitsune are easily able to seduce anyone they please.
3. Secretive – all Kitsune feel a driving urge to protect their information. A Kitsune will never lie to you about something, but this does not mean it will answer every question. Often your

attempts to extract information of even the most general sort from a Kitsune will be a frustrating process and sometimes downright impossible

4. Protective – Kitsune value bonds and family a great deal, if they have chosen a mate or are simply around a friend they will be very protective over that person or thing if a threat is posed to it. (On a side note, it is very rude in Kitsune culture to interfere with another's affairs. So unless it is absolutely necessary, they will stand back until needed)
5. Manipulative – Kitsune are natural illusionists, and because of this they are very good at manipulating people. This is often seen used with seduction or trickery, but some Kitsune have been known to use manipulations to solve affairs they could not become involved in.
6. Intelligent – it goes without saying, Kitsune are some of the wisest creatures on earth. They have many years to increase their intelligence and are naturally curious enough to want to gain more knowledge
7. Cautious – factoring in with the above, Kitsune are naturally very wary and suspicious of anything they come into contact with. Any story told to them or gift offered to them is often required to be proven to be true, or proven to be safe.
8. Possessive – factoring in with protective, once chosen by a Kitsune, a person or thing becomes the foxes possession. The Kitsune will consider you\it as if you belonged to it, and will act accordingly if someone or thing tries to endanger you\it
9. Vampirism – Kitsune all draw from a type of life force, be it elemental or emotional, to survive. The most common form of Kitsune vampirism ties into manipulation and seduction, as it is sexual intercourse.

Section 4: common misconceptions

There are many common misconceptions concerning Kitsune in general, much of these misunderstood things come from the interpretation of human judgment on their actions. The following is a few of the most common misconceptions about them, and a brief explanation for them.

1. Evil – Kitsune, by nature, are not evil nor are they good. If the Kitsune was forced into a category it would be chaos or discord, as they choose of their own accord what they wish to do. "evil" Kitsune such as Reiko are often viewed as such because what they find amusing is often detrimental to the humans around them.
2. Immature – Kitsune enjoy scampering about and playing tricks on people, but they are by no means immature. A Kitsune grows more knowledgeable each day of its life, and as long as they live this can add up to a lot of wisdom. The reason they play tricks is because it amuses them.

3. Power – Kitsune, while after a certain point, are indeed on the demi-god scale of power, they hardly use it for anything other than satisfying their own curiosity and amusing themselves.

4. Vampirism – Kitsune do not require blood in their vampirism. They feed off of emotions and life energies. And while some cultures believe blood to be the most potent source of life energy, it is not what a Kitsune uses nor requires.

====part 2=====

2. Society and Traditions

Kitsuné are sometimes considered to be kami, which are spirits. These kami are very in-tune with nature which grants them several abilities such as control over certain elementals according to folklore. Some people used to (and some still do) worship these kami by bringing them offerings such as tofu or prayers in hopes of their protection in return.

Kitsuné also have a deep connection to a Shinto deity known as Inari, or the Buddhist name Dakiniten. Inari is a deity of rice and wealth. Inari is sometimes seen as either a young woman, an aged man with a long, white beard or a fox. Inari's fox form seems to upset priests at Inari shrines in Japan but not as much as the concept of her being a snake or a dragon (Smyers 1999:Cool).

In Japan, foxes are admired often for their ability to live between borders, quite literally. Also meaning that the kitsuné are between the social barriers, frequently doing things, which are deemed socially unacceptable. Sometimes, when someone is drunk or acting "out of place", they are often accused of being possessed by a fox (called Kitsuné-tsuki). (Smyers 1999:187-199)

3. Sociology of the Vulpine

The red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is a part of the canidae family. The fox is a solitary and territorial animal by nature; that is unless it is mating season. There are characteristics of both the dog and the cat in a fox. Someone would think foxes are the result of a cat and a dog but this is not so. Foxes are also very curious and mischievous animals by nature. It is interesting to note that a part of the fox's courtship ritual involves the dog-fox (male) bowing in front of "his" vixen (female fox). (Wolf Park 2005:1-9)

According to Japanese tales (called monogatari), kitsuné are said to have multiple tails. The meanings behind these tails may vary, such as representing the kitsuné's age, power or wisdom. Foxes, by nature, do not have a hierarchal system like wolves do. The tails are not a symbol of dominance over other kitsuné but a sign of which he or she is ranking and deserves respect as elders looked up to in Japanese culture.

There is debate of what sort of kitsuné there are. The three most common are: The first is the myobu or Celestial kitsuné. They are said to serve Inari and are seen anywhere there is an Inari shrine as guardians. The myobu are benevolent in nature and most are byakko (or white fox). The second are the nogitsuné (literally wild fox) who do not serve Inari and are mischievous and neutral in nature. The third are the reiko, who do not serve Inari either and are also said to be affiliated to the elemental Void (darkness). Although reiko are more malevolent in nature, they are not necessarily considered evil.

4. Tricksters of Japan

Kitsuné folklore indicates these mysterious creatures as shape shifters. Their transformations may include virtually anything, such as: A male Buddhist priest, a young maiden who seduces or trick men (mainly Samurai and drunken men), trees and stones (LaHaise 1997:6). A kitsuné's "shifting" is a complex illusion, usually done by completing a ritual. For example, here is an excerpt from the book *The Fox Woman* (2000:150):

"I had no hands, no clever fingers to lift and balance the skull. I pushed my nose under, as if pushing aside a heavy bough. ... 'Bow to the seven stars of the Great Bear.' Afraid it (the human skull) might slip, I tipped my head carefully, but it clung as if held there by sap, a heavy rotting weight on my head, the upper jaw an arc across my brow. I felt each tooth like a heavy bead. ... I tilted my face up to the moon, the skull clinging like a cap. I barked once, then again: ... The moonlight hissed like mist falling around me. ... Like a reflection on water, one of Inari's moon-foxes overlaid itself and spoke: 'Choose.'"

Following that ritual, in due time do the effects of transformation come into play. Other transformations mentioned in other monogatari tales have almost instant success, such as the kitsuné simply using dead leaves as currency to trick people into selling them an item.

The kitsuné performing an illusion may have a small comma-shaped or marble-shaped jewel, which is said to be (but not necessarily) white and may have a distinct glow to it. This jewel, called the hoshi-no-tama, or star ball. The purpose behind the hoshi-no-tama is still rather unclear but according to folklore, it is said, the jewel contains a portion of the kitsuné's life force or power and so will guard it very closely.

5. Mysteries of the Kitsuné

When a kitsuné seduces a man and kisses him, she pushes the jewel into his mouth and brings it back into hers. After repeating this for some time, the man becomes pale because she is feeding off his life force. Legend has it that if one swallows the jewel and looks to the sky; one will be given the wisdom of heaven and if one looks down at the ground one will be bestowed with the wisdom of earth.

Although there are both male and female kitsuné, the male will most likely also take the role of a female in order to seduce and sleep with a man. The reason for doing so is that kitsuné as a whole are a yin (feminine) based race, they lack the yang (masculine) energies, which are said to be contained within the human male's semen. The yang energy is essential in order to balance their yin energy and achieve spiritual advancement and immortality through their sexual desire (De Visser 1908:10).

It is said; the first to achieve orgasm in sexual intercourse with a kitsuné loses a portion of their life force (whether it is the kitsuné or its "victim"). If the other partner is able to refrain from achieving orgasm, they will consume the other's life force (in this case the kitsuné). There is a play in which the life of the infamous Lady Tamamo no Mae is carried out. She is the kitsuné who was responsible for the loss of thousands of lives in several countries and the fall of many empires. The play suggests the following were her doing: The destruction of king Pan-Tsu from India, the fall of the Chou dynasty and Japan, where she enters the emperor's court. Upon discovery by a shaman, she reverts to her original golden-furred, nine-tailed fox form and flees. She is said to have later transformed into a large stone near the moor of Nasumo where anything that comes near dies. Bones are said to be scattered in the area as well (LaHaise 1997:18).

"Many stories describe foxes imitating humans, but in an eighteenth-century text, when a man imitates a fox by jumping over a torii (the red arches found near Inari shrines which indicate a portal between the physical and spirit worlds), he falls into the hell of animals." (De Visser 1908:62)

Kitsuné sometimes use an ability to create a flame-like substance by rubbing their tails together. This "flame" is called a kitsuné-bi, or fox-fire. The kitsuné-bi is said to be often used as a lure to lead men into traps, lanterns or as a simple toy.

The kitsuné are known to be very vengeful beings. They will repay a person in exact to their actions. Such as the monogatari tale in which depicts a samurai who wounded a kitsuné, so as vengeance it crawled to the man's house and set it on fire. However, the kitsuné will also repay a person for a good deed done to it, such as if a man saves the kitsuné's life, is said to repay the person by offering protection even in the most dangerous situations from gratitude.

Velvet:

if you bothered reading through that, and want some sites to further the research or information, then please message me.

- terra youkai AKA Velvet Vixen.

~finished~

a 17 year old kid:

Huh, definitely an interesting read. I like reading about yokai, so that was definitely something.

May I ask that you post said sites here? Would be a bit easier.

Mr. Teh-ah-tim-eh:

All that for an Asian fox?

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Alice in Wonderland! Placebos, Nocebos, and Voodoo Death! American Secret Society Symbolism! Rasputin and the Empress! Midcentury Stereopanorama!

blogspot.com

Saturday, December 5, 2015



We have many wonderful upcoming events at the Morbid Anatomy Museum! Please note that we'll be transitioning to a 7 pm start time for evening events as reflected in some of the listings below.

Be sure to save the date for the Morbid Anatomy Taxidermy Festival at The Bell House! Curated by resident taxidermists Katie Innamorato and Divya Anantharaman, and featuring Taxidermy Art author Robert Marbury as MC, the festival will include

demonstrations and show and tells by the East Coast's leading taxidermists, as well as lectures, archival films, a photo booth, costume contest, and much more. We hope you'll join the fun this January 24th!

One week from today we'll host a party celebrating the Morbid Anatomy Anthology's second printing. Editors Joanna Ebenstein and Colin Dickey will introduce the night, which will include short talks by contributors Chiara Ambrosio, Shannon Taggart, and Amy Herzog. Many of the authors will be on hand to raise a glass and sign copies of the book.

We'll commemorate the publication of Alice in Wonderland with a merry dissection of Lewis Carroll's classic tale by author and illustrator Ted Enik (Wednesday, January 6th at 7 PM); explore the fascinating history and science of the placebo, the nocebo, and "voodoo death" (Friday, January 8th at 7 PM); and learn about the symbology of fraternal societies in America by looking at the functions and meanings of some of their favorite articles, selecting from paintings, banners, costumes, ceremonial regalia, and ritual objects (Wednesday, January 20th at 8 PM).

Join us on what would have been Rasputin's 147th birthday for a 16 mm screening of Rasputin and the Empress starring Ethel, John, and Lionel Barrymore in a plot to murder the mad monk for the benefit of the Russian royal family (Thursday, January 21st at 7 PM); we reprise Midcentury Stereopanorama, our popular Stereo Realist viewing party featuring fully-restored stereoscopic viewers, original midcentury slides and period tunes (with two engagements on January 27th and February 17th, each at 8 PM); and once more bring together an inspired pairing of sight and sound as we screen The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari in 16mm with sonic accompaniment by Brooklyn composer and sound artist MV Carbon.

We hope to see you tomorrow for a free daytime children's book event with Mummy Cat

illustrator Lisa Brown (Saturday, December 5th at 3 PM); and next week for a special engagement in Green-Wood Cemetery looking at American monuments and memorialization with Eva Bowerman, Chair of the New York chapter of the Association for Gravestone Studies (Tuesday, December 8th at 7:30 PM, offsite at Green-Wood Cemetery); and another installment of our popular Forensic Pathology 101 series with a focus on death certificates (Wednesday, December 9th at 8 PM).

Our last flea market of the year is just around the corner on Sunday, December 13th at The Bell House! To gain early access and bypass the line at any point in the day, consider becoming a museum member! Aside from just flea market perks, museum members enjoy unlimited access to the exhibit and library, early notification of our often sold-out events, special rates on museum parties, and discounts in our store and cafe. Learn more and purchase your membership here.

Finally, for international fans, we will be in Amsterdam for the third annual Morbid Anatomy Anatomy Weekend at the Museum Vrolijk (Friday, April 15 – Sunday, April 17th); and in Vienna at the Narrenturm Pathological Museum and the Josephinum Museum (Friday, April 22 – Sunday, April 24th). Both events will feature special tours, lectures, workshops, anatomical demonstrations, and more—all in English!

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December 11, 2014 By Medievalists.net

Starting with the Black Death in the fourteenth century, Europe would suffer from repeated attacks of the plague for the rest of the Middle Ages and centuries afterwards. It is not surprising that people sought the best ways they could avoid contracting the illness – in late medieval and Renaissance Italy the fight against plague was often waged in the air.



Renaissance Florence – photo by Francesco Caminiti

One of the early ideas about the causes of plague was that there was a contamination of the air – that bad odours were spreading the disease. In cities such Florence, which was hit by several major epidemics between 14th and 17th centuries, the prevailing medical advice on how to avoid getting sick was to surround oneself with pleasant fragrances. In her book *Toliette, Perfumes and Make-Up at the Medici Court*, Valentina Fornaciai explains:

People relied on various scented items to fight the contaminated air: they hung little bottles of perfume on their belts, they put little bags full of scents between scented

clothes, they wore jewels and other accessories made of perfumed paste and they even sprinkled their hands and arms with vinegar. Scented sponges and balls became a part of people's typical defences when they went out. Acute, bitter scents like vinegar were thought to be of great help. In view of the fact that it had a strong smell, vinegar was also 'splashed' out of specifically made containers on hot summer days when the miasma from urban waste and the dreadful bodily odour from people became unbearable. In times of suspected or confirmed outbreaks of the plague or even in normal conditions, houses had to be full of odorous fumes. Fragrant extracts were scattered around or mixed with scented waters and sprinkled and scented powders or pastes were burned in perfume burners and so forth.

The famous Medici family, which ruled Florence for much of this period, were also interested in how to avoid the plague, and they had the money and resources to be able to follow the leading medical advice of the time. Around the turn of the seventeenth-century, one of the family members, Antonio de Medici (1576–1621), collected various plague remedies. These medical recipes included creating scented balls that people would carry with them, oils to rub over their bodies, and foods to eat or drink that would supposedly offer them protection.

Here are several of the recipes collected by Antonio de Medici, translated by Valentina Fornaciai:

[The plague] is caused by two things, from the heating of the blood, and its contamination so we have to take care of things which heat the blood: strong wines, the great exertion of worry and fear, mutton, old birds, all hot herbs, like mint, sage, rue, rosemary and marjoram, all citrus fruits, leeks, garlic, onions and shallots contaminate the blood, meat..., and fish, cabbage, and all fruits except pomegranate, oranges, lemons and dried plums but not too many, take care to not eat too much, sleep too much, especially during the day, take care of the wind, don't have too much sexual contact and avoid all bad smells but when one one is infected...heat a cloth...and wrap the patient in it, and when they begin to sweat dry

them with linen cloths and let them sweat.

Half an ounce of fine purged laudanum, 3 ounces of fine calamite storax, myrrh, and 5 drachms of cloves, one drachm of Valerian juice, fine musk, and one carat of imbracane and the things to be blended should be carefully crushed, and sifted, and the gums should be put in a hot mortar, then add lemon balm juice, and bugloss, and make the ball, and keep it in your hand, it will be of great benefit.

Rue tops, one clove of garlic, a walnut, a grain of salt, and eat on an empty stomach everyday for up to a month, and you must be cheerful, and this recipe, it's good against vermin and it's perfect.

Take aloe or succotrin, fine cinnamon myrrh in equal quantities of 3 drachms, clove, macior, aloe wood, mastic, 2 drachms of prepared Armenian bole [red coloured earth], grind everything together in a mortar carefully and mix, then place in a well stopped up glass vase or a well closed box so it doesn't evaporate and when you need it in times of suspected outbreaks or if you want to go to a place at risk of the plague take 2 coins in weight of this powder in the morning on an empty stomach with two fingers of white wine and by doing this, please God, you will not have any illness.

Take white dittany, astrologia rotunda, carline thistle, verbena, gentian, curcuma, deer antlers in equal quantities of 2 drachms, grind them a little with a handful of rue, and take a flask of the best wine you can find and put everything together...leave it until a suspected outbreak occurs than take half a glass of this wine every morning rather than leave home on an empty stomach, but you must first take a walnut, and a dry fig and three sprigs of rue, and do this every morning and every evening, and you will be safe for that day.

Take 6 ounces of sulphur, 2 ounces of arsenic, 6 ounces of Palestine incense, 9 cloves. One nutmeg, 2 scruples of mace, 1 scruple of St Peter's leaves, 2 scruples of radish leaves, 9 laurel berries, 1 scruple of knapweed leaves, 5 grains of myrrh, verbona root and ginger in equal quantities. Orange peel, peony leaves in equal quantities of 2 scruples, 5 grains of mastic, 30 rue seeds. Grind everything together and reduce to a rough powder. Put in a little bag made of red satin or damask and wear around the neck on the side of the heart, and in the summer put it over your heavy coat, and in the winter over your shirt so sweat does not ruin it.

Take purified mercury 5 pounds 6 ounces, common salt 1 pound 4 ounces. Green copper 2 pounds 8 ounces. Hungarian vitriol 1 pound 4 ounces. Grind together and put in a new iron pan and fill with blacksmith's water and bring slowly to the boil, stirring with a wooden spatula, and everything will bind together to form a metallic paste. Make medals which will become hard in the open air and wear them around the neck, they are good for warding off the plague.

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Secrets of 'lost cities' under the sea revealed, from taxes to goddesses

The secrets of the lost cities of Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus, underwater for 1,200 years, are to be showcased at the British Museum



A pink granite 'garden vat' discovered at the site of Thonis Heracleion. A pink granite 'garden vat' discovered at the site of Thonis Heracleion. Photo: ©Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation - Photo: Christoph Gerigk. Photo: ©Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation - Photo: Christoph Gerigk

known civilisation preserved in the sand.

Curators said the exhibition would "transform our understanding" of the relationship between ancient civilisations, showing unique melding of Egyptian and Greek cultures frozen in time.



The intact stele (1.90 m) is inscribed with the decree of Saïs and was discovered on the site of Thonis-Heracleion

It is the stuff of legend: the lost city under the sea discovered in tact, revealing a submerged world forgotten for 1,200 years.

But the **British Museum** is stage a major exhibition uncovering just that, as it puts 200 objects recovered by divers from "Egypt's lost worlds" on display in Britain for the first time.

Items from two sunken cities off the coast of **Egypt** will be assembled in the London museum, giving a tantalising glimpse into a little-

The cities, **Canopus and Thonis-Heracleion**, are believed to have been founded in the 7th century BC, but submerged in the 8th century AD after being blighted by unstable ground and an unknown natural disaster.

Despite historians being aware of their existence thanks to brief mentions in ancient texts, they have lain untouched for centuries thanks to a sandy sea bed and extremely poor visibility for any diver who ventured near.

A 15-year project to explore the site, made possible through new technologies, will now culminate in a major British Museum exhibition to open next year.

It will tell the story of the underwater excavation through photography, maps, 3D technology and around 200 items taken directly from the sunken cities themselves.

Among them will be an 18-foot-tall statue of Hapy, the “divine personification of the Nile’s flood”; the largest example of its kind ever found.

A sensual statue of Arsinoe II, the eldest daughter of Ptolemy I, will also go on show, depicting her as Aphrodite in a sheer dress in the Grecian style.

I have a dream that the visitor will have the same pleasure that we had when we discovered them in the water.

Franck Goddio

An imposing stone tablet, a 380BC Royal Decree from Nectanebo I, will reveal the tax settlements of the day, with 10 per cent of all tax collected on imports from the “Sea of Greeks” donated to a local Egyptian temple.

The majority of objects are taken from religious sites, with the people of Canopus and Thonis-Heracleion fleeing the city before it was submerged.

Smaller items include lead replica barges, believed to have been displayed amid candles and offerings on the waterways to celebrate the Mysteries of Osiris festival.



Statue of Arsinoe, Canopus, Aboukir Bay, Egypt

The items, which represent only around two per cent of the total artefacts available on the bottom of the sea bed, will be lent to the British Museum by Egypt, where they are currently held by a range of museums.

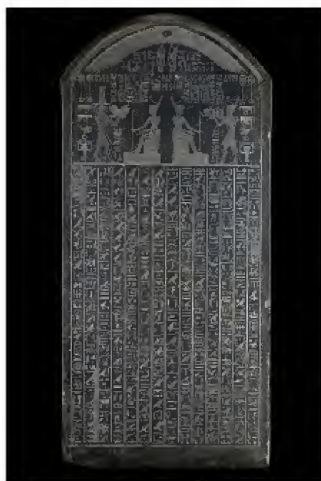
They are the first objects to be on loan since the 2011, and are intended to encourage tourism back to the area by showing off Egypt’s colourful history.

The cities, known through ancient texts and said to have been visited by Helen of Troy, were uncovered by the Institut Européen d’Archeologie Sous-Marine in 1996, just a few metres under the sand.

Since then, a team led by **Franck Goddio** has been undertaking a painstaking exploration and mapping process, uncovering 64 shipwrecks, religious statues, offerings to the gods, coins for trading and the remnants of a network of canals.

Major artefacts that will change historians’ understanding of the period have been brought to the surface, with some on display in Egypt and visiting Paris before being assembled to tell the full story of recovery at the British Museum from May 2016.

The remaining 98 per cent of the cities have been left in situ, for future generations to see underwater.



Stele of Thonis-Heracleion,
Thonis-Heracleion, Aboukir
Bay, Egypt

Remarkably, despite being under the sea bed they have been preserved better than many such temples on land, being protected from looters, centuries of interest from archaeologists and unrest in the area.

Franck Goddio, exhibition co-curator, said: "I have a dream that the visitor, seeing the artefacts, graphics and maps, will have the same pleasure that we had when we discovered them in the water."

Aurélia Masson-Berghoff, exhibition curator at the British Museum, added: "It is a rare opportunity to reveal the beauty and strength of Late Pharaonic art and culture, alongside the latest research on the momentous intermingling between **Egyptian** and Greek communities in Egypt at this time.

"We are illustrating this vibrant cosmopolitan world through Egyptian, Greek and 'hybrid' artworks, rarely ever displayed side-by-side.

"It shows Ancient Egypt not as an isolated civilisation, but as the outward looking, influential and inclusive society that it was."

The BP exhibition, Sunken Cities: Egypt's Lost Worlds, will open at the British Museum from May 19 to November 27, 2016.

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Plug bullet wounds in 20 seconds with this FDA-approved syringe

theverge.com

- By James Vincent
- on December 9, 2015 03:43 am



(RevMedX) (RevMedX)

A sponge-filled syringe designed to close up gaping gunshot wounds in seconds has been approved for use in America's civilian population. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says that the device — originally developed for use by the military — can now be deployed by civilian first responders to control severe bleeding.

"92 tablet-sized sponges expand to fill in the wound"

The syringe works by injecting small, expandable cellulose sponges into wounds that can't be stopped from bleeding with the use of a tourniquet (e.g. wounds in the groin

or armpit). The sponges expand on contact with blood in just 20 seconds, blocking its flow out of the body. Each applicator absorbs up to a pint of blood and up to three syringes can be used on a single patient. The sponges are only a temporary measure, though, intended to stop bleeding until the patient can be taken to a hospital. To help detect and remove the dressing at a later date, each sponge is tagged with a radiopaque marker.



How the Xstat works. (Xstat / RevMedX)

It's hoped that the device — known as the Xstat Rapid Hemostasis System — will be a lifesaver in trauma scenarios. According to data from the United States Army Institute of Surgical Research, 30 to 40 percent of civilian deaths from traumatic injury are caused

by blood loss. And of this number, 33 to 56 percent of individuals die before they can reach a hospital.

"When a product is developed for use in the battlefield, it is generally intended to work in a worst-case scenario where advanced care might not be immediately available," said the FDA's acting director of device evaluation, William Maisel, in a press statement. "It is exciting to see this technology transition to help civilian first responders control some severe, life-threatening bleeding while on the trauma scene."

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Police rush in after man heard screaming 'I'm going to kill you'; discover noise caused by him attacking spider

Michael Safi

Thursday 26 November 2015 Last modified on Thursday 26 November 2015

theguardian.com

Officers in Sydney respond to reports of man shouting threats and furniture being thrown – only to find a ‘quite embarrassed’ man on his own in an apartment

Sydney police say a man was left “quite embarrassed” after several neighbours mistook his efforts to kill a spider for a domestic violence incident.

Around 2am on Sunday several police cars rushed to an apartment in the northern suburb of Wollstonecraft, responding to reports of a woman screaming hysterically, a man yelling, “I’m going to kill you, you’re dead”, and furniture being thrown.

A man police described as “out of breath and rather flushed” answered the door and the local area command’s Facebook page documented the exchange that followed.

“Where’s your wife?” an officer asked.

“I don’t have one,” the man replied.

“Where’s your girlfriend?” he pressed.

“I don’t have one,” he said.

Police told the man neighbours had heard the screams, the threats to kill, the dull thud of flung furniture. “Come on mate, what have you done to her?” the officer asked.

“It was a spider,” the man replied sheepishly. “A really big one.”

“What about the woman screaming?”

“Yeah sorry, that was me,” he said. “I really, really hate spiders.”

The commotion was down to the man frantically chasing the spider around his apartment with a can of insect spray, police said.

They inspected the unit just to be sure, finding nobody injured. “Other than the spider,” officers added.

It’s not the first time a spider has sparked alarm. Another arachnophobe set a service station in Michigan on fire in September after he tried to scare a spider away from his petrol tank using a lighter, with predictable results.

Driver sets gas station on fire after using lighter to scare off spider.

Yet another, this one an assistant prosecutor in West Virginia, found himself in hot water in

October after pulling a gun and threatening to shoot fake spiders arrayed in his office as Halloween decorations.

comments

- AbbottTrainWreck

responding to reports of a woman screaming hysterically

that's like the ned flanders scene in the simpsons!

- Josie McPaul

PERFECT!!! I am surprised I have not been caught for this also!!!

- Earl_Grey

Lucky the guy wasn't Muslim or this would have been classed another Terrorist attack and had Border Force and 800 media attend.

- Malcolm Tent Earl_Grey

Found the SJW.

- yoghurt2

We're destroying the ecological web of life, and we're destroying the animals that create webs.

More than a coincidence.

- ID6734731

Hey, don't kill spiders.

Remember, spiders don't kill people, venom kills people.

Just so you know.....Charlton Heston told me, so it must be true.

- Aeolus51 ID6734731

Oh that's good. Sad, but good.

- ianhassall

The police say the man was embarrassed !

What about the police themselves and the neighbours, don't they feel a little bit silly too ?

Really this is a result of the poorly-targeted domestic violence hysteria we have going on at the moment, where everyone lives in their homes in absolute fear lest their loved one gives them a backhander.

- Andrea Leong ianhassall

I think they erred on the right side -- it's totally appropriate to call the police if you hear someone screaming "I'll kill you" and hear sounds of furniture being broken.

- LilAussieTechGuy ianhassall

Hysteria? Sounds like you're shit-stirring. Or just a dope.

- mediashit ianhassall

Not overlooking the backhander of a false allegation of domestic violence (a claim of pointing one's finger meets the definition) by parties who for reasons of their own want the marriage terminated. That may include spouses of guys who brought them to Australia on marriage visas (current cost \$6800). As a successful allegation accelerates PR status. These laws the subject of of appalling exploitation by alleged victims. But raise and you will be shouted down.

- pinniped

Did Mr. Muffet get his spider?

- AlexJBF

I'm calling BS.

- Bluebirdsfly

surely it's the police and neighbors who should be embarrassed, not the spider man.

- Caryn Spriggs Bluebirdsfly

Why should they be embarrassed? The police had a report of possible domestic violence and they followed up on it, and the neighbours were vigilant enough to report what they thought was a crime being committed. Luckily it wasn't in this case.

- Jon Liddle Caryn Spriggs

Lucky it wasn't in the US...the police would probably have shot him, just to be on the safe side.....

- mediashit Bluebirdsfly

Yes but that suburb so quiet virtually anything louder than slamming a Merc car

door would rate as a 'disturbance'.

- LooseOne

Come on mate, what have you done to her?

Lolz!

- mediashit

Jeez yahoo missed out on this story.

- Braddles

Probably a huntsman spider. They are active when the weather warms up, look scary but pretty docile. Once I shoed one out of the house like a dog, only to be sitting listening to music a month or so later when a thousand baby huntsman spiders poured out of one of my speakers. Typical day in Sydney, really.

- Daretotread

Large spiders in Australia are a major cause of ROAD accidents. We have a delightful add for insurance running in Australia just now whereby a small boy accidentally releases a large spider in Dad's car, with predictable results. I fully sympathise, having had two spider related car accidents.

Now I can handle very large spiders at a distance (ie same room, but not too close to may face eg in car).

- MrPooter1888

To be Australian, and not at the hands of a US response.

- Bloodshed

Human fear of spiders is hardwired from 300Ma, when large ground spiders used to hunt small burrowing synapsids.

This is known.

- Michael John Jackson Bloodshed

Are you an Unsullied?

- Michael Kang Michael John Jackson

It's "it is known"

- Michael John Jackson Michael Kang

Thanks for the clarification Spock.

- OpineOpiner

In my case it's my computer I sometimes want to kill-- look, I've been patient, I've gone and done the bloody dishes, vacuumed the floor, and the thing is still trying to connect to a website?!?!?! Inanimate object my foot, which is what I sometimes want to put through it! Or purchase a new computer and destroy the old one in front of it as an object lesson!

- WestCoastPR OpineOpiner

Wow, I thought I was only one who fantasized on a regular basis of destroying shitty tech in a ritualistic fashion. I like the object lesson idea. Cheers.

- Barbacana OpineOpiner

and the thing is still trying to connect to a website?!?!?!?

It's quite likely the fault was not with you computer, but with your connection to the internet (your ISP), or sluggish response from the website you're trying to connect to.

In which case, replacing the computer would not change anything.

- summerswood OpineOpiner

An adblocker certainly helps, except the Guardian then begs for ad revenue.

- laSaya

The government could use this story as an ad to scare off illegal arrivals.

- Thekla2 laSaya

I wouldn't put it past them! They've already tried mosquitoes.

- h1machiii

Contrast how the police in Sydney responded to this incident to how the police in America respond to such incidents. A woman in Santa Monica, locked herself out of her apartment, called a locksmith to get in and a neighbor called the police to report a break-in (the woman was Black, the neighbor White) and 19 police officers responded with guns drawn, forced her out her apartment and cuffed her. A simple knock on the door and a few questions and the incident in Sydney was resolved. A world of difference.

- DVGriffin h1machiii

We pause now for the swelling of the National Ocker Head.

- OpineOpiner DVGriffin

All the same h1machiii has a good point. So much of the police brutality in the States--and there is so much of it more than in other nations--could be avoided by taking ten seconds worth of time to look around and assess!

- TheBBG DVGriffin

My hat size grows every day I read a US news site.

Australia is a good dose of America, but done better. Much better, in spite of our problems and worries. Too bad the Liberals worship the US version and are hell bent on taking us in that direction.

- Jadzia D

OMG! Love it! LOL

- veryangrycanuck

This whole article is just a "Look, there's a squirrel " piece in order to distract attention from the really dangerous creatures in our environment such as Tories.

- ameliaposte

Poor dude. He was probably scared it was one of the poisonous spiders.

- Koninklijk

"What about the woman screaming?"

"Yeah sorry, that was me," he said. "I really, really hate spiders."

Awkward.

- baby1dumpling2

Spiders are good luck.

- Vance Spurrier baby1dumpling2

I'm sure somewhere bed bugs are good luck.

- Michael John Jackson baby1dumpling2

Not if it kills you.

- Corsair1972 baby1dumpling2

I'm afraid you don't feel very lucky when its a funnel web in your house

- FleshOnMind

When my boy was a toddler, he was playing with the phone, and he dialed 911, which is emergency in the US, whoops, so I got a call back from the operator, she was quite cool about it, and could hear him talking nonsense, so let me off, alarming though.

- tenzin25 FleshOnMind

Why. Did. You. Bother?

- an_anonymouse tenzin25

Why did you bother to be so rude?

- Socks McRockin

I used to work as a 999 dispatcher.

I had a call once where the first thing I heard was an agitated young man screaming "You shot me! You fucking SHOT me!" with loud music blaring in the background. I was about to slam it straight through to the police, but then about 4 people burst out laughing and I could hear the sound effects of Golden Eye. It was a pocket-dialled call - they were having a great time on the N64 with beer and snacks, the lucky sods. Nearly gave me a freaking heart attack, though.

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This Thursday, Nov. 26, 2015 photo provided by Pablo Diaz-Gutierrez shows a baseball bat with large lag screws embedded in it, chained to a pole in the Mission district San Francisco. Police are asking for help in finding who is chaining up these spiked bats to poles throughout the city. SFPD Sgt. Michael Andraychak says officers first received reports of spiked

wooden or metal bats appearing on poles and parking meters in the city on Thanksgiving morning. At least 27 had been found by late Friday. (Pablo Diaz-Gutierrez via AP)

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — San Francisco Police are asking for help leading to those chaining up spiked baseball bats to poles throughout the city.

San Francisco Police Sgt. Michael Andraychak says officers first received reports of wooden or metal baseball bats appearing on poles and parking meters in the city on Thanksgiving morning.

Andraychak says 27 bats with spikes running through them have been found since then. The latest discovery was Friday in the Fishermen's Wharf area.

Andraychak says the spikes on the objects allow them to be considered a prohibited or deadly weapon, which is a felony.

Investigators ask anyone with more information to call them.

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Professor Wingard's Nameless Force

hoaxes.org

In February 1876, "Professor" James C. Wingard of New Orleans announced he had invented a powerful new weapon that would utterly destroy any naval vessel, iron or otherwise, "so as to leave no trace of them in their former shape." Wingard was coy about the exact means by which his weapon operated. He would only say that it projected a "nameless force," which somehow involved the use of electricity, applied without any direct connection between the machine and the object to be destroyed — and it supposedly worked at a distance of up to five miles, far beyond the range of any other gun or cannon. In other words, this was a nineteenth-century version of a death ray. Wingard claimed that a few ships outfitted with his weapon would be able to dominate all the other navies in the world combined. In fact, he anticipated that his weapon would mean the end of naval warfare altogether, since the first navy to acquire it would become invincible and reign supreme.



The New Orleans Demonstration

On June 8, 1876, Wingard conducted a demonstration of his "nameless force" weapon in Lake Pontchartrain, attended by a committee of prominent citizens and naval officers.

The committee watched from the shore, while Wingard operated his apparatus from a small skiff on the water. The target vessel was a large, wooden schooner (the *Augusta*), anchored one-and-three-fifths of a mile away.

At 2:35 p.m. Wingard gave the signal that he was about to discharge his apparatus. The people on shore saw some smoke rise from his machinery. Later, some of them claimed they saw the trail of some kind of substance move rapidly through the water, out from beneath the skiff and toward the schooner.

However, initially nothing happened to the schooner. Over a minute passed, and the spectators assumed the test had been a failure. But suddenly there was an explosion, and a cloud of smoke rose above the stern of the vessel. "There she goes!" someone said. The schooner began to sink rapidly into the water.

The committee members rowed out to the ship and found it completely wrecked. From a report in the *New Orleans Republican*:

"Even the small timbers aft of the mainmast were broken all to pieces. The mast was still standing, but all else was wrecked so that it would not stand being towed ashore. The flag was torn to pieces and fell to half mast, where it was still flying."

Unfortunately, Professor Wingard burned his hand during the demonstration. He explained that the silk glove with which he held a glass tube had not been a sufficient non-conductor. But apart from this mishap, the test was deemed to be a complete success.

June 9, 1876 headline in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*

The Boston Debacle

THE NAMELESS FORCE.

Professor Wingard Blows up a Schooner at a Distance of One and Three-fifths Miles.

New Orleans Republican.
A process verbal has been made out and signed by Prof. C. G. Forshey, L. P. Maddox, and M. F. Higney, in which these gentlemen state that they yesterday witnessed the demonstration of Prof. Wingard's "nameless force," at Lake Pontchartrain; that at 2.15 o'clock in the afternoon the Professor discharged his apparatus, and 100 seconds after the schooner at which the test was applied, moored at one and three-fifths miles distance, blew up by the stern and sank to the water's edge. The memorandum of the Committee goes on to state that after Prof. Wingard came ashore they went to visit with him the vessel in a sail-boat. They found her completely wrecked. Even the small timbers aft of the mainmast were broken all to pieces. The mast was still standing, but all else was wrecked so that it would not stand being towed ashore. The flag was torn to pieces and fell to half mast, where it was still flying.

carried out that day.

Buoyed by the success of the New Orleans demonstration, Wingard moved to Boston several years later, where he formed a stock company to further develop his weapon. His company soon raised \$1800, but his new investors wanted to see the weapon work for themselves. So Wingard arranged for a demonstration in Boston Harbor.

Wingard manned his apparatus from inside a dark house on the deck of a small steamer. A target vessel was positioned about a mile away. But suddenly, before the test had begun, there was a large explosion on the water, at a considerable distance from both vessels. The wreck of a rowboat was then found at the site of the explosion, carrying the mangled remains of two bodies. Wingard appeared highly agitated by what had happened and said his experiment couldn't be

But, shaken by the tragedy, Wingard broke down a few days later and confessed the truth to his stockholders. His "nameless force" weapon was a sham. The demonstration was a trick achieved by placing dynamite under the target vessel, connected to the triggering apparatus by an underwater wire. Two of Wingard's co-conspirators had been on their way to place the dynamite when an accidental explosion occurred, killing them both.

No more was ever heard of Wingard and his "nameless force" weapon.

Links and References

- "Another invention to destroy navies" (Feb 7, 1876). *San Francisco Chronicle*.
- "The Nameless Force: Professor Wingard blows up a schooner at a distance of one and three-fifths miles" (Jun 9, 1876). *Chicago Daily Tribune*.
- "Wingard's explosive apparatus" (Nov 14, 1879). *Chicago Daily Tribune*.
- "Some Scientific Hoaxes" (June 12, 1880). *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science, and Art* 859: 376-378.

Comments

If I say 'hoax' I'd be suggesting the sham was a hoax so I'd be suggesting the 'death ray' was the culprit. I just find it difficult to visualize the plots and steps some people go to create these kinds of scams!

Posted by hullitoons in Abingdon, Maryland on Thu Nov 17, 2011 at 04:49 AM

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Protesters disturb Mass at Catholic churches in Las Vegas

ktnv.com

Jacqui Heinrich, Gina Lazara

12:32 AM, Dec 10, 2015

2:37 PM, Dec 10, 2015



Parishioners are terrified after protesters have disturbed Mass at several Catholic churches across the valley.

The group, Koosha Las Vegas, includes members who clearly identify themselves as former Muslims turned Christians. They've been entering churches during services, shouting at Catholics that they need to repent now or else, and filming the acts and posting them on the Internet.



The videos make clear the group has been active on the Las Vegas Strip and several other places around the valley. They're often seen with large signs and megaphones. The difference now is that they're going into houses of worship and

causing disturbances. Parishioners tell Action News it's made them fear for their lives.

"Repent, and turn to Jesus Christ. Pope is a Satan! Pope is a Satan! Mary statue is a Satan!" the man behind the camera can be heard shouting.

The videos are taken by the very people passing out the pamphlets and shouting during mass in at least 3 incidents confirmed by police. The Catholic Diocese of Las Vegas confirmed to Action News "multiple disturbances at several of their properties."

"Stop worshipping to the idols! Idols not going to save you! You need Jesus Christ! You need the father, the son, and the holy spirit," a man shouts to a group of worshippers during Mass at Our Lady of Las Vegas Catholic Church on December 5.

Parishioners we talked to say they were initially scared because of the recent climate of

terrorism, and the group makes clear many members are Muslims turned Christian. Although they're preaching the word of Christ to other Christians, to be told "your religion is not going to save you", clearly audible on video, they said was unsettling.

It's not just happening at church. The same group posted a protest outside Bishop Gorman Catholic School on Dec. 2. In that video, a man can be seen telling students, "If you look at the catechism of the Catholic church and you look at scripture, you know why god hates this religious system."

The scene was so unsettling to some parents that many tried to dismantle it, honking their horns in the video. The man behind the camera can be heard saying "The demons are angry guys. The demons are angry."

Las Vegas police tell Action News they did take a close look at the incidents and they do not appear to be related to any terrorist threat. They also said no arrests were made because technically no crime was committed.

The Catholic Diocese of Las Vegas says they are working with police to educate clergy across the valley about what has recently happened.

CONTINUED:

Channel 13 Action News Crime & Safety Expert Randy Sutton weighed in on the incidents to say how fearful our community should be after an act like this.

Sutton says, first of all, he disagrees with Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department saying there was no crime committed. He says the men violated a Nevada statute, "disturbing a religious meeting." Sutton says they should absolutely be charged with a crime.

"It's a misdemeanor crime but it is a crime nonetheless, it's on the books for just types of situations like this. There are statutes that could be utilized to end this type of behavior," said Sutton.

Sutton also says, if the men were asked to leave and they refused, they could be charged with trespassing too. The expert says this situation should be taken very seriously and it could have easily ended up violent. Sutton says, in light of recent terror attacks, every person in the church had a very good reason to be concerned.

"This is really unusual behavior. This isn't something that happens all the time. So the fact that it even happened, would be enough to cause alarm and legitimately so," he said.

STATEMENT FROM CATHOLIC LEAGUE FOR RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Bill Donohue comments on church invasions in Las Vegas:

Catholic churches in Las Vegas are being stormed by an organized band of crazed evangelicals known as Koosha Las Vegas. They invade churches during Mass, shouting at parishioners to repent. "Pope is Satan!" "Mary is a Satan!" "Stop worshipping the idols!" "Idols are not going to save you!" "You need Jesus Christ!" Police have confirmed at least three incidents.

Catholic school students are also being harassed. "If you look at the Catechism of the Catholic Church and you look at the Scriptures," the bigots scream, "you know why God hates this religious system."

The cops have thus far not made any arrests, claiming no law has been broken. They are mistaken.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees religious liberty. If that means anything, it means that people of faith must be free to practice their faith. Moreover, these Nazi-like tactics are prohibited by the Nevada Constitution, the second ordinance of which reads as follows: "That perfect toleration of religious sentiment shall be secured, and no inhabitant of said state shall ever be molested, in person or property, on account of his or her mode of religious worship." There are also laws against trespassing, as well as hate crimes statutes.

We are asking the Office of The Sheriff at the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department to arrest any person who storms a Catholic church, or any house of worship. They need to be prosecuted with the full force of the law.

Contact the Sheriff: Sheriff@lvmpd.com

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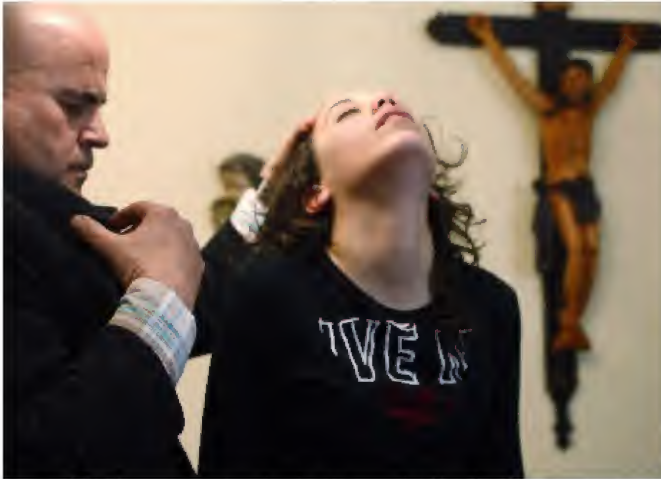
Purging daily demons: what's behind the popularity of exorcisms?

theconversation.com

November 30, 2015 6.02am EST
Joseph P Laycock

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In 2014, an exorcism took place outside of a Starbucks in Austin, Texas. A 1788 painting by Francisco Goya depicts Saint Francis performing an exorcism. The April 6, 1966 issue of Time Magazine. Pope Francis blesses a boy in Rome.

An exorcism being performed in Fafe, Portugal. Jose Manuel Ribeiro/Reuters

At Texas State University, I teach an honors course called "Demonology, Possession, and Exorcism." It's not a gut course. My students produce research papers on topics that range from the role of sleep paralysis in reports of demonic attacks to contemporary murder cases in which defendants have claimed supernatural forces compelled them to commit crimes.

In fact, talk of demons isn't unusual in Texas. The first day of class, when we watched a clip of an alleged exorcism at an Austin Starbucks, many of my students said that they'd seen similar scenes in the towns where they'd grown up.

A few students even admitted their parents were nervous that they'd signed up for the class. Maybe these parents worried their kids would become possessed, or that studying possession in the classroom might make demons seem less plausible. (Perhaps it was a mix of both.)

Either way, these parents aren't a superstitious minority: a poll conducted in 2012 found that 57% of Americans believe in demonic possession. Nonetheless, demons (invisible, malevolent spirits) and exorcism (the techniques used to cast these spirits out of people, objects or places) are often thought of as relics of the past, beliefs and practices that are incompatible with modernity. It's an assumption based in a sociological theory that dates back to the 19th century called the secularization narrative. Scholars such as Max Weber predicted that over time, science would inevitably supersede belief in "mysterious forces."

But while the influence of institutionalized churches has waned, few sociologists today would claim that science is eliminating belief in the supernatural. In fact, in the 40 years since the blockbuster film *The Exorcist* premiered, belief in the demonic remains as popular as ever,

with many churches scrambling to adapt.

Exorcism's golden age

So why has exorcism made a comeback? It may be that belief in the demonic is cyclical.

Historian of religion David Frankfurter notes that conspiracy theories involving evil entities like demons and witches tend to flare up when local religious communities are confronted with outside forces such as globalization and modernity.

Attributing misfortune and social change to hidden evil forces, Frankfurter suggests, is a natural human reaction; the demonic provides a context that can make sense of unfamiliar or complex problems.

While Europeans practiced exorcism during the Middle Ages, the “golden age” of demonic paranoia took place in the early modern period. In the 16th and 17th centuries, thousands were killed in witch hunts and there were spectacular cases of possession, including entire convents of nuns.



A 1788 painting by Francisco Goya depicts Saint Francis performing an exorcism.

Wikimedia Commons

The Protestant Reformation was a key contributor to these events. The resulting wars of religion devastated Europe's population, creating a sense of apocalyptic anxiety. At the same time, exorcism became a way for the Catholic Church, and even some Protestant denominations, to demonstrate that their clergy wielded supernatural power over demons – something that their rivals lacked. In some cases, possessed people would even testify that rival churches were aligned with Satan.

But by the 19th century, medical experts such as Jean-Martin Charcot and his student Sigmund Freud had popularized the idea that the symptoms of demonic possession were actually caused by hysteria and neurosis. Exorcists came to be seen as unsophisticated people who lacked the education to understand mental illness – a view that made exorcism a liability for churches instead of an asset. This was especially true for American Catholics, who had long been disparaged by the Protestant majority as superstitious immigrants.

The Exorcist effect

By the time William Peter Blatty's novel *The Exorcist* was published in 1971, the secularization narrative had gone mainstream. In 1966, *Time* magazine had run its famous cover asking “Is God Dead?” In 1970, Gallup found that 75% of Americans claimed religion was losing influence – the highest percentage in the history of the poll, which was first conducted in 1957.

Time



The April 6, 1966 issue of Time Magazine.

Blatty's protagonist, Damien Karras, is a Jesuit psychiatrist-priest who has lost his faith. At the end of novel, Karras lies dying from his battle with the demon Pazuzu. He cannot speak, but his eyes are "filled with elation" – presumably because he now has positive proof that demons and, by extension, God, actually exist. Through the character of Father Karras, Blatty captured a widespread feeling of longing for the supernatural in a disenchanted age.

While the Jesuit-run magazine *America* panned *The Exorcist* as "sordid and sensationalistic," Blatty proved that Americans were not dismissive of the idea of exorcism. In 1971 and 1972, the novel spent 55 weeks on *The New York Times* bestseller lists. The film adaptation grossed over US\$66 million in its first year. In 1990, as part of homily given in New York City's St Patrick's Cathedral, Cardinal John O'Connor even read from *The Exorcist* in order "to

dramatize the reality of demonic power."

A demonic renaissance

Today a significant segment of the population reports belief in demons.

According to a 2007 Baylor Religion Survey, 48% of Americans agreed or strongly agreed in the possibility of demonic possession. And in a Pew Research Survey conducted that same year, 68% of Americans said they believe in the presence of angels and demons.

While the surveys can't reveal what exactly people *mean* when they say they "believe in demons," it's clear that these people don't constitute a superstitious minority. Rather, they're a normal part of today's religious landscape.

People have historically used evil spirits to explain any number of misfortunes, whether its a physical illness or routine bad luck. But today, demons are frequently used to interpret contemporary political issues, such as abortion and gay rights. Since the 1970s, Protestant deliverance ministries have offered to "cure" gay teenagers by casting out demons. This practice now has corollaries in Islam – and even in Chinese holistic healing methods. When the state of Illinois legalized gay marriage in 2013, Bishop Thomas Paprocki held a public exorcism in protest. Politically, the bishop's ritual served to frame changing social mores as a manifestation of demonic evil.

Similarly, Catholic exorcists in Mexico held a "*magno exorcisto*" in May 2015 aimed at purging the entire nation of demons. The mass exorcism was partly motivated by the drug wars that have devastated the country since 2006. But it was also in response to the legalization of abortion in Mexico City in 2007.

During one Mexican exorcism, a demon (speaking through a possessed person) confessed that Mexico had once been a haven for demons. According to the four demons identified in the exorcism, hundreds of years ago, Aztecs had offered them human sacrifices; now, with the legalization of abortion, the sacrifices had resumed.

Divided over demons

In the Baylor Religion Survey, 53% of Catholics said they either agree or strongly agree in the possibility of demonic possession. Twenty-six percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the rest were undecided. Progressive Catholics still regard exorcism as an embarrassment, and there are also increasingly vocal atheists and skeptics eager to cite the practice of exorcism as an example of the absurdity of religion. But in countries like Italy and the Philippines, there is active demand for more Catholic exorcists.



Pope Francis blesses a boy in Rome.

Tony Gentile/Reuters

Church authorities are keenly aware that if they do not provide the spiritual services these people need, Pentecostal deliverance ministries will. In the past, the Church had much more ability to tailor its message to its audience. But in an age of Twitter and cellphone cameras, an exorcism performed in one country will be witnessed by the entire world.

Pope Francis seems especially skillful at navigating the question of demons. While he has inspired progressive Catholics with his stances on climate change and social justice, he has also emphasized the reality of the devil. In 2014, the Congregation of Clergy formally recognized the International Association of Exorcists. This is a group of conservative priests that has existed outside the Curia since 1990, and has lobbied for recognizing and normalizing the practice of exorcism. Founding IAE member Gabriele Amorth has even attributed the group's sudden success to Pope Francis.

Perhaps the greatest example of Francis's demonological savvy occurred on May 13 2013, when he placed his hands on a young man in a wheelchair after celebrating mass in St Peter's Square. (This young man was, in fact, the same Mexican parishioner believed to be possessed by four demons.) Video shows the boy heaving and slumping forward under Francis's unusually long embrace.

To those who feel the Catholic Church ought to take exorcism seriously, this was a clear example of Francis performing a public exorcism. But to those who regard exorcism as a relic of the Dark Ages, Church authorities can plausibly claim that this was only a blessing, perhaps lasting just a little longer, due to the pontiff's sincere compassion for the young man.

For a church with over a billion followers, it's a tough – but necessary – balancing act.

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Rare Abraham Lincoln bust that went missing is recovered

By Jan Murphy | jmurphy@pennlive.com | Follow on Twitter on November 27, 2015 at 6:54 PM

pennlive.com



The Abraham Lincoln bust that had been stolen from the front of The Hall of Presidents on Baltimore Street in Gettysburg was recovered on Friday in a nearby cemetery. (Max Felty, Gettysburg Tours president)

The one-of-a-kind bust of Abraham Lincoln that went missing overnight Sunday from outside of the Hall of Presidents on Baltimore Street in Gettysburg has been found.

An officer from the Gettysburg Borough police confirmed the bust was recovered on Friday and there was no major damage done to it. He said he was not authorized to disclose further information about the incident.

The York Daily Record is reporting the was found by a visiting family around noon in the Evergreen Cemetery, which sits next door to the museum,

The newspaper reported that the bust, and the pedestal on which it sat, which was previously recovered in the museum's parking lot, will have to undergo some repairs before it is displayed again.

"Everyone is really glad that it's been returned, and we're glad its all over," Max Felty, president of Gettysburg Tours, told the newspaper.

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Rash of squirrel attacks in Marin County prompt warning

By Kale Williams

Updated 10:50 am, Wednesday, December 2, 2015

sfgate.com

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Rash-of-squirrel-attacks-in-Marin-County-prompt-6670430.php>



This photo provided by Wild Birds Unlimited shows a squirrel attempting to eat bird seed on an Eliminator, a squirrel-proof bird feeder. Officials in Novato are warning residents to be on the lookout for a squirrel or squirrels, not pictured here, that have been attacking people in recent weeks. Photo: Associated Press

There are plenty of things to be scared of in this world: terrorism and natural disasters to name a few. But residents of Marin County have to add squirrels to the list after the ferocious rodents have jumped on and bitten eight people in recent weeks.

The rampaging rodents prompted county health officials to issue a warning this week about the rash of bizarre attacks.

The incidents differ in specifics, but all have occurred near the intersection of Sutro Avenue and Vineyard Road in Novato over the last two and a half weeks, according to the Marin Humane Society

“The attacks are described as a squirrel suddenly running up to the victims, crawling up their bodies, and biting them in various areas,” the humane society said in a statement, noting that victims have suffered injuries to their hands, arms, legs and head. At least eight people have been injured, with one requiring a trip to the emergency room.

Residents of the Novato area will want to keep their heads on a swivel as not all of the attacks have come from below.

“There have also been reported instances in which squirrels have jumped out of trees and attacked the victims,” the humane society said.

Last month, a squirrel ran into a classroom at Pleasant Valley Elementary School, about a block from where the other attacks have occurred. Once inside, the rodent bit a student and teacher before fleeing the scene into an open space near the school, according to a report from KPIX.

If the thought of an unprovoked squirrel attack doesn’t scare you enough to make you stay inside forever, let’s not forget that a pack of at least a dozen raccoons rushed an Irish couple who were out walking their dogs in San Francisco in November, one of two similar encounters in the city’s Richmond district this year.

The dogs were injured, but were expected to survive, and the woman had to receive a rabies shot.

The humane society, the county Department of Health and Human Services, and WildCare, an animal care provider, are investigating the string of attacks in Novato and think they are likely all attributable to the same exceedingly angry varmint, though they have not released a suspect description in the attacks.

Officials also noted that rabies in squirrels is very rare, but all of the victims are receiving anti-rabies medication as a precaution. Investigators suspect the offending rodent was once domesticated and lost its natural fear of humans. The humane society cautioned people never to feed wild animals, which is prohibited in Marin County.

The humane society also said homeowners can make their yards less attractive to rodents by cutting back trees that overhang roofs, blocking potential entrance sites to their homes and removing bird feeders.

*Kale Williams is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: kwilliams@sfchronicle.com
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Ruin of a second-century public toilet in Roman Ostia.

20 November, 2015 - 00:50 ancient-origins

Rats, Exploding Toilet Seats and Demons of the Deep: The Hazards of Roman Sewers

I have spent an awful lot of time in Roman sewers – enough to earn me the nickname *Queen of Latrines* from my friends. The Etruscans laid the first

underground sewers in the city of Rome around 500 BC. These cavernous tunnels below the city's streets were built of finely carved stones, and the Romans were happy to utilize them when they took over the city. Such structures then became the norm in many cities throughout the Roman world.

Focusing on life in ancient Rome, Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia, I'm deeply impressed by the brilliant engineers who designed these underground marvels and the magnificent architecture that masks their functional purpose. Sewer galleries didn't run under every street, nor service every area. But in some cities, including Rome itself, the length and breadth of the main sewer, the Cloaca Maxima, rivals the extent of the main sewer lines in many of today's cities. We shouldn't assume, though, that Roman toilets, sewers and water systems were constructed with our same modern sanitary goals in mind.

The streets of a Roman city would have been cluttered with dung, vomit, pee, shit, garbage, filthy water, rotting vegetables, animal skins and guts, and other refuse from various shops that lined the sidewalks. We moderns think of urban sewers as the means to remove such filth from streets – and of course flush away human waste that goes down our toilets.

Researching Roman urban infrastructure for my new book *The Archaeology of Sanitation in Roman Italy* made me question whether the Romans shared the same vision. The archaeological evidence suggests that their finely constructed sewer systems were more about drainage of standing water than the removal of dirty debris. And Romans' sense of cleanliness and privacy around bathroom matters was quite different from our tender modern sensibilities.

Inside a tunnel of Rome's sewer, the Cloaca Maxima. Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, CC BY-ND

Sewers managed excess water more than waste

The Cloaca Maxima in Rome was not part of a master plan to sanitize the city. Its purpose was removing water that pooled on the city's uneven streets and draining water from low-lying areas when the adjacent Tiber River flooded, which happened quite frequently. Its main function was drainage – and what it drained ran right back into Rome's major drinking supply before the aqueducts, the Tiber.

Roman sewers moved filthy water away from where it hindered cleanliness, economic growth, urban development and even industry. My work in the sewers of Herculaneum and Pompeii – both buried by the pyroclastic flow caused by Mount Vesuvius' volcanic eruption in AD 79 – has brought me to the same conclusion.

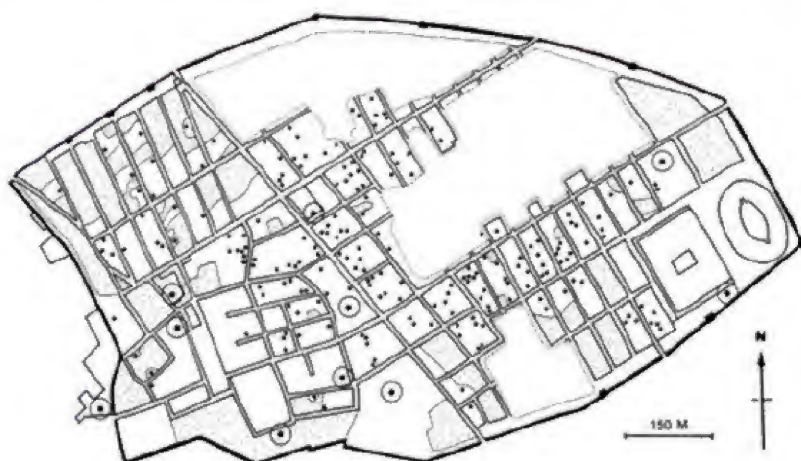


Inside a tunnel of Rome's sewer, the Cloaca Maxima.

At the bottom of one sewer under a street in Herculaneum, the first excavators found an ancient deposit of hardened sludge measuring about 1.35 meters high. No amount of water, however fast-flowing, would have been able to remove that. Several ancient sources state that Roman sewers needed manual cleaning from time to time, a job often done by city slaves or prisoners. I'd argue these urban sewer systems provided minimal sanitary benefits overall.

Map of Pompeii showing public and private toilets. Gemma C M Jansen

Plenty of toilets, few sewer hookups



Map of Pompeii showing public and private toilets.

Public and private toilets were sprinkled throughout the city of Pompeii. But despite the city's sewer infrastructure, virtually none of these toilets had sewer connections. We have similar evidence for ancient Herculaneum.

In fact, almost every private house in these cities, and many apartment houses in Ostia, had private, usually one-seater, toilets not connected to the main sewer lines.

And these cesspit toilets were often situated in the kitchen, where food was prepared! The comforting

smells from a hearty stew would have mingled with the gross odors from the nearby open cesspit. Collected waste was either sold to farmers for fertilizer or used in household gardens – which must have made for some pretty stinky garden parties from time to time.

According to Ulpian's Digest, written between AD 211 and 222, connections to the sewers from private dwellings certainly were legal. So why didn't property owners hook up to the public sewer lines?



A private toilet under the stairs in Herculaneum's Casa del Gran Portale. Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, CC BY-ND

One reason may be tied to that fact that Roman sewer openings had no traps. One never could be sure what might climb out of an open sewer pipe and into your house.

We have at least one dramatic ancient story that illustrates the danger of hooking your house up to a public sewer in the first or second century AD. The author Aelian tells us about a wealthy Iberian merchant in the city of Puteoli; every night a giant octopus swam into the sewer from the sea and proceeded up through the house drain in the toilet to eat all the pickled fish stored in his well-stocked pantry.

Broken connections in a Herculaneum house's terracotta downspout within



Broken connections in a Herculaneum house's terracotta downspout within the wall would have caused stinky leaks.

the wall would have caused stinky leaks. Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, CC BY-ND

Adding to the stench of Roman life, my close examination of ancient plumbing found that many downpipes from house toilets on upper floors would have suffered serious leakage inside the walls as well as oozing onto the outside of the walls too. The fittings of these terracotta downpipes loosened over time, and their contents would have caused stink everywhere.

I was able to identify at least 15 upper-story toilets at Pompeii and others at Herculaneum and elsewhere. In some cases, I obtained proof through scientific testing for urine and/or excrement that the spillage was indeed human waste from these pipes.

Public toilets held their own hazards

Even public latrines – multi-seater toilets that were almost always connected to the main sewer lines of a city – posed serious threats to users. Don't be fooled by the clean white marble and open-air sunniness of the reconstructed ruins we can see today; most Roman public toilets were dark, dank and dirty, and often situated in small spaces. Those who could "hold it" long enough to return to their own houses with their own cesspit toilets certainly would have done so.

One public toilet at Ostia, with its revolving doors for access and fountain basin for cleaning up, could handle more than 20 clients at a time. I have found no evidence that Romans had to pay to use public toilets, and we really don't know who managed or cleaned them, apart from the possibility of public slaves. To our modern eyes there was almost a complete lack of privacy in such facilities; but bear in mind that Roman men would have been wearing tunics or togas, which would have provided more screening than a modern man would enjoy with pants that have to be pulled down. Perhaps a bigger problem for today's standards of cleanliness: the Roman version of toilet paper in many cases was a communal sponge on a stick.

Even worse, these public latrines were notorious for terrifying customers when flames exploded from their seat openings. These were caused by gas explosions of hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) and methane (CH₄) that were rank as well as frightening. Customers also had to worry about rats and other small vermin threatening to bite their bottoms. And then there was the perceived threat of demons that the Romans believed inhabited these black holes leading to the mysterious underbelly of the city.

One late Roman writer tells a particularly exciting story about such a demon. A certain Dexianos was sitting on the privy in the middle of the night, the text tells us, when a demon raised itself in front of him with savage ferocity. As soon as Dexianos saw the "hellish and insane" demon, he "became stunned, seized with fear and trembling, and covered with sweat." Such superstition would provide another good reason for avoiding sewer connections in private house toilets.

Goddess Fortuna on the wall of a the Suburban Baths in Pompeii. Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, CC BY-ND

Going to a public toilet was definitely a dangerous business, so it is no wonder that the Goddess Fortuna often appears as a kind of "guardian angel" on the walls of toilets. We don't tend to put religious shrines in our toilets, but we find them again and again in both public and private toilets in the Roman world.

One graffito on a side street in Pompeii directs a warning at a toilet-user himself: "Crapper Beware the Evil"... of crapping on the street? Of putting your bare bottom on an open toilet hole for fear of biting demons? Of the ill health you will feel if you do not move your bowels well? We'll never know for sure, but these are likely possibilities, I think.



Goddess Fortuna on the wall of a the Suburban Baths in Pompeii.

When we look at the evidence for Roman sanitary practices, both textual and archaeological, it becomes obvious that their perspectives were quite different from ours. Gaining a better understanding of Roman life on their streets, in their public spaces, and in their private dwellings shows us that they were in the early stages of developing systems that we've adopted – with upgrades – for our own problems with sanitation and clean water today.

Featured image: Ruin of a second-century public toilet in Roman Ostia. Credit: Fr Lawrence Lew, OP, CC BY-NC-ND

This article, originally titled 'Talking heads: what toilets and sewers tell us about ancient Roman sanitation' by Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow was published on The Conversation and has been republished under a Creative Commons license.

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Real-life fairytale villains haunt Berlin this winter

23/11

thelocal.de



Real-life fairytale villains haunt Berlin this winter

Jörg Luyken · 4 Dec 2015, 15:25

Published: 04 Dec 2015 15:25
GMT+01:00

In west Berlin an old woman has been trying to poison people with sweets, while on the capital's outskirts a wolf is prowling through the forests.

While it may seem like episodes from Grimm fairy tales, two news stories caught the attention in the

German capital on Friday for their eerie, perhaps malevolent nature.

In the suburb of Spandau police are looking for a woman who has been handing out Christmas cakes laced with poison, reports daily tabloid BZ.

The lady, described as being around 50 years old, thin and with dark hair with wisps of grey, offered a bag of enticing treats to a Turkish man and his female companion.



The poisoned cakes. Photo: Polizei Berlin

Soon after they ate some of the biscuits though, the pair became sick and went to a doctor. A blood test revealed that the same chemicals as those found in rat poison were present in their bloodstream.

Luckily the dose was not high enough to cause lasting damage

to their health.

Police advised in a Tweet against taking food offered for free.

He'll huff and he'll puff

Meanwhile a wolf has been photographed inside the motorway ring around the city, the first time this has ever happened, reports Tagesspiegel.

A hunter used a night vision camera to snap the wolf in the Brandenburg forest as it was about to pick up some apples from beneath the trunk of a tree.

Wolves are being spotted more and more often across Germany. But they are especially common in the east where they cross over from forests in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Kay-Uwe Hartleb the voluntary wolf commissioner in the area said he thought it was a young animal due to the size of its legs.

"Young wolves don't have a map in their heads. When they sense that the way they're going is becoming too crowded then they turn round," he reassured the Berlin daily.

Story continues below...

But local hunter Wolfgang Brückner was more concerned by the development.

"They are coming ever closer to humans," he warned.

"The population is on the rise. They go wherever they find wild boar. But I'm asking myself what happens when they don't find any more boar to eat."

Let's just hope there are no old woman living in Brandenburg forest who are paid visits by granddaughters wearing hooded red coats.

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Reports of people dressed as clowns raise concerns in Waukesha

Reports of people dressed as clowns in Waukesha near Carroll University in recent weeks have left some uneasy.

Earlier this month, police got a report of person dressed as a clown in the area of E. Main St. and N. Hartwell Ave., which is near Carroll University. Officials confirmed the person was a 15-year-old boy who is developmentally delayed.

Waukesha Police Sgt. Jerry Habanek said the teen likes to watch the reactions people have when he's dressed as a clown. Police have been in communication with the teen and his family.

Rumors went around about the clown sighting, with some saying the person was a sex offender or was linked to Silly the Clown, a former professional clown who was convicted of felony sexual assault, Habanek said. Neither of those rumors were true. Habanek said the teenager has no ill intent.

Then on Friday, Habanek said, there were two reported clown sightings on the Carroll University campus. One clown reportedly had a white face and was wearing a white costume, which police weren't able to verify. The second was wearing a green jester-type costume that was waving.

Habanek said police did not make contact with either reported clown, but they did find footprints where the clown with the jester-type costume was reported to be.

Police also verified that the teenager who had been dressed as a clown earlier in the month was at home on Friday night.

The university's Public Safety Department received two reports of a person dressed in a clown suit on the school's campus on Nov. 20, said Jeannine Sherman, director of communications and marketing.

"The person in the suit neither approached nor attempted to make contact with anyone on campus," she said in an email. "There have been no additional reports or sightings since then."

Sherman said police were contacted, and based on their investigation, there is not believed to be a threat to the campus community. She also said the school's 'robust' public safety presence has increased its visibility in the areas where the person in the clown suit was reported.

While some are unnerved by the reported clown sightings, those wearing the costumes aren't necessarily in trouble.

"None of the clowns are doing anything illegal," Habanek said. "It's all odd behavior ...but it's not illegal behavior."

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Reports Of Sonic Boom In Boyle, Lincoln And Garrard Counties

Thursday, November 26 2015 5:42 PM EST

lex18.com

Posted: Nov 27, 2015 12:43 PM PST Updated: Nov 27, 2015 2:15 PM PST



Note This graphic is not from Thursday's possible meteor*

Note* This graphic is not from Thursday's possible meteor

People across Central Kentucky have a lot of questions after hearing a loud boom Thursday night.

LEX 18's Patrick Price spoke with Angela Bryant, who was headed home from a Thanksgiving dinner with her husband when something lit up the night sky.

"It lasted about three seconds, and it was very bright and it caught our attention and then it

disappeared," said Angela.

She said it looked like the meteor that shot across the sky over Ohio Monday.

There was also one over Southern Indiana last Thursday.

Facebook was blowing up about reports of a "fireball" across the sky and a loud sonic boom.

Experts say that an estimated 3,000 meteors hit the Earth each year.

"Science is mystery right, we really don't know," said Angela. "Just have to wait until it happens."

Some people reported that the boom was so loud it shook homes.

LEX 18 received multiple reports of people in Boyle, Lincoln and Garrard County hearing the boom.

No official word on what lit up the sky or what the boom was.

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Want to mail Mars? Better start saving

05/12/2015

news.com.au

Q: How much would it cost to send a letter to Mars A: Nearly \$24,000

December 5, 2015 9:01am



Curious kid ... Oliver Giddings wrote to Royal Mail to ask about mailing Mars. Picture: Chris Bull/AFP

BRITAIN'S Royal Mail has turned to NASA for help after a five-year-old boy wrote in asking how much it would cost to post a letter to Mars.

But Oliver Giddings probably won't be able to send a letter to outer space as the price -- £11,602.25 (\$23,860) -- is well beyond the reach of most children's pocket money.

In its reply to Oliver, who wants to become an astronaut, the Royal Mail explained on Friday how the figure was calculated.

"Fuel is very expensive and affects the cost of sending letters around our planet," senior customer adviser Andrew Smout wrote.

"NASA also told me that their last visit to Mars, carrying the Curiosity rover, cost about \$US700 million (\$950 million).



A long way to the red planet.

Source:Supplied

"The spaceship itself is very small so storage is at a premium. Based on how much the spaceship weighed compared to how much it costs to get to Mars, they said that something weighing up to 100 grams would cost them approximately \$US18,000 to fly to Mars."

The Royal Mail added that the price of the letter would be covered by 18,416 first class stamps.

Oliver, from near Lytham St Annes in northwest England, wrote back to Royal Mail thanking them for their reply. "It's very expensive to send a letter to Mars. You would need so many stamps!"

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Homer Collyer, arguing with police. "Homer Collyer 1939" by Source (WPNFCC#4). Licensed under Fair use via Wikipedia –

Throughout history, some people have decided to forgo human contact and live a life of solitude. Whether for religious reasons or simple preference, these hermits become objects of gossip and curiosity in the surrounding community.

While history is scattered with such lonely souls, one of the saddest and strangest stories of self-imposed solitude is that of the Collyer brothers. The descendants of one of the country's oldest families, Homer and Langley Collyer were wealthy eccentrics who met a sad, lonely end after years of solitude in their New York brownstone mansion.

Upbringing and hermitage

Homer Collyer was born in 1881, while Langley was born four years later. Their father, was Herman Collyer, a prominent New York doctor. They grew up in the Murray Hill section of Manhattan, and summered on Long Island on the family's spacious country estate. Both brothers attended college: Homer graduated from City College in 1902, then moved on to study law at Columbia. Langley studied electrical and mechanical engineering, also at Columbia.

In 1909, Herman Collyer purchased the brownstone mansion on 2078 Fifth Avenue, where his sons would meet their sad fates 38 years later. Herman and his wife separated sometime after that, allegedly because Herman wanted to turn the brownstone into a sanitarium and his wife disagreed. After the split, Herman moved into another house, where he lived until his death in 1923. Mrs. Collyer lived the remainder of her life with her sons in the brownstone, until she passed away in 1929. The brothers Collyer inherited their father's estates, and with the death of their mother, they withdrew more and more into their reclusive little world.

A reclusive life

"All we want is for people to leave us alone. A man's home is his castle. What we do inside it is our business." Homer Collyer

After their parent's deaths, the Collyer brothers withdrew into their three story brownstone. Homer briefly worked for the City Title Insurance Co., from 1929 to 1931. But by 1932, he told a neighbor that he was going blind. After that, the neighbors never saw him leave the house again.

Langley followed his brother's lead. He only left the mansion at night, when he bought food and dumpster dives for cast-offs with which he increasingly hoarded their home. He fed Homer 100 oranges a day, hoping it would cure his blindness. He bought several daily papers for his brother, which he kept in boxes so that his brother could catch up on current events when his sight returned.

Conditions in the house deteriorated as the hoarding situation worsened and the brothers withdrew into themselves. The city cut power because the brothers would not allow anyone in to read the meter. In response, Langley rigged up a generator to provide electricity, but the system proved too cumbersome to use so the brothers resorted to kerosene for light and heat.

Rumors began to spread about the brothers. Many assumed that the dilapidated house contained a trove of riches: from rare antiques, to valuable artwork, to safes full of cash. Neighbors frequently knocked on the front door, while vandals threw rocks and bottles at the windows.

The unwanted attention made Langley paranoid. He boarded up the windows and formed all the junk he had accumulated over the years into makeshift barricades and a maze of tunnels rigged with booby traps that would drop hundreds of pounds of garbage upon any hapless intruder.

By 1940, Homer's health was in decline. Rheumatism paralyzed his body. Langley moved him to a barricaded room where he attended his brother's every need. The last time anyone saw Langley alive was six years after Homer was stricken with Rheumatism. He testified against a man accused of attempting to break into his house.

During the trial, Langley claimed that he had ten grand pianos in the house, one of which was a gift to his mother from Queen Victoria. He played this treasure for his brother. It was later found that the total was not ten as he had claimed, but fourteen. Perhaps this lapse was a sign of Langley's deteriorating mental state, or a simple oversight by a man who owned far too much to keep track of it all.

A mysterious call and a grisly discovery



*A view inside the Collyer house.
"Collyer's a". Licensed under Fair use via
Wikipedia -*

The morning of March 21, 1947, a man calling himself Charles Smith called the police, saying that there was a dead man in the Collyer house.

Officers arrived to find that they couldn't force the front doors. When they took the doors off the hinges, they found a wall of boxes. Upon breaking the first floor window, they found that the ground floor was crammed with stacks of junk to the ceiling.

By noon, officers found entrance through a second story window. They wound their way through the piles of junk to find the corpse of Homer Collyer. He had not eaten or drank for three days before his death. He died from a combination of chronic bronchitis, gangrenous bedsores, and emphysema. Langley was nowhere to be found. Officers suspected that he was the one who placed the call once he found his brother dead, and he then slipped away.

On the second day, clean up began. By the end of the day, officers had removed 19 tons of trash from the residence. The curious gathered, but didn't stay long due to the horrendous stench. Police smoked cheap cigars to ward off the foulness. A housing inspector present at the scene said that the house was rotten inside and out due to a leaky roof and open windows.

By March 31, the city hired movers to finish the clean up. The hoard was an eclectic mix: 25,000 books, 14 grand pianos, hope chests, toy trains, 13 ornate mantel clocks, fine violins, two organs, and ton after ton of papers, assorted bric-a-brac, and trash. By April 3, the movers cleaned 51 tons of trash from just the first floor rooms.

On April 8, after removing another 52 tons of junk, the movers made a grisly discovery: a foot poking out of a pile of garbage. It was the body of Langley Collyer. Officers believed that, when crawling through a tunnel in the garbage, his cloths caught on a trip wire and he was buried under tons of garbage. He eventually suffocated to death.

Once the mansion was cleaned out, the city's building commissioner ordered it demolished.

Sources:

Bryk, William. "The Collyer Brothers." NYSun.com. April 13, 2005. The Sun. October 21, 2015.
<http://www.nysun.com/on-the-town/collyer-brothers/12165/>

"The Collyer Mystery Solved." The Pittsburgh Press. April 9, 1947. Pg 21

2 thoughts on "Modern Day Hermits: The Sad Story of the Collyer Brothers"



1. **Graham Clayton** November 11, 2015 at 4:59 pm

With so much junk and stuff, I am amazed that the brothers were able to get 14 grand pianos into the three-storey house!



1. **Andrew Kincaid** Post authorNovember 15, 2015 at 1:08 pm

I know right? They were really able to cram a lot of stuff in there. There was also a model T in the basement and a canoe in the attic.

By Ben Hooper

| Dec. 1, 2015 at 1:04 PM



A salmon swims across a flooded Washington state road. JukinMedia video screenshot

OLYMPIA, Wash., Dec. 1 (UPI) -- A Washington state motorist captured video of salmon swimming across a road amid flooding from heavy rains.

The video shows salmon taking a short-cut on their way from the Puget Sound to the rivers where they spawn by swimming across the shallow water covering a road amid heavy

rains in the area.

"This is why we love Washington," a voice says in the video.

The salmon cross the road in the distance before a large fish, described by an occupant of the vehicle as "a beast," crosses right in front of the car.

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Brazilian police hunt Santa Claus who stole Sao Paulo helicopter yahoo.com

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters) - Brazilian police are hunting for a Sao Paulo Santa Claus who kicked off the Christmas shopping season by stealing a helicopter.

The thief rented the aircraft late Friday from an air taxi service at the Campo Marte airport in Sao Paulo for a Black Friday "surprise," the Sao Paulo state security secretariat said on Saturday.

During the flight, the Santa forced the pilot to fly to a small farm outside of Sao Paulo city, where they were met by a third person, the secretariat said.

The pilot was tied up and the two perpetrators flew away.

After several hours, the pilot managed to escape and alert police. There has been no sign of the helicopter, a Robinson model 44, authorities said.

(Reporting by Jeb Blount; Editing by Dan Grebler)

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Police: Santeria priest raided cemetery, took remains of 5

Dec 7, 4:15 PM EST

ap.org

Mon Dec 7 2015

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) -- A man described by police as a Santeria priest caught with human remains in his Connecticut home agreed on Monday to go to Massachusetts to face accusations that he stole the five skeletons from a mausoleum.

Amador Medina, 32, made a brief court appearance in Hartford on Monday and agreed to be taken by police to Worcester, where authorities allege he stole the remains two months ago from a family mausoleum that dates to 1903.

Police arrested Medina on Friday after the remains were found in his Hartford apartment. Medina told police he was a Santeria priest and wanted the human bones for religious and healing ceremonies, said Hartford Deputy Police Chief Brian Foley.

"We see (Santeria) rarely in Hartford," Foley said. "When we do, it's generally with animals. Very even more rarely you get human remains."

Authorities said they found two garbage bags containing remains on Medina's porch. Inside the apartment, officers found human bones, what appeared to be animal remains and shrines with candles, according to court documents.

Worcester police were expected to pick up Medina in Hartford later Monday and bring him back to their city to face charges.

Medina's public defender didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment on the allegations. His relatives and friends declined to comment outside the courtroom.

Santeria mixes Roman Catholicism with a traditional African faith. Scholars say it was imported to Cuba through slaves brought from the Nigeria's Yoruba tribe, and it is now widely practiced in the Caribbean.

Foley said police have learned that practitioners of Santeria use human bones for medicinal purposes, and the age of the deceased and how long they have been dead are relevant to those practices.

The remains of three adults and two young children were stolen from the Houghton family mausoleum in Hope Cemetery in Worcester, where police have obtained an arrest warrant charging Medina with five counts of disinterment of bodies and other crimes.

The mausoleum was built for the family of Charles Chandler Houghton, a prosperous boot manufacturer and real estate developer in Worcester, The Telegram & Gazette newspaper reported.

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Extensive Sauropod Tracksite Discovered On The Isle Of Skye iflscience.com

Extensive Sauropod Tracksite Discovered On The Isle Of Skye

December 2, 2015 | by Josh L Davis

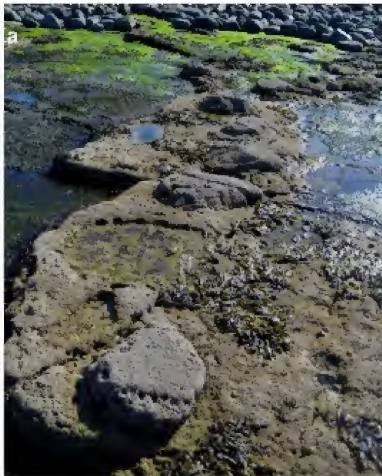


Photo credit: A re-creation of what Skye may have looked like 170 million years ago. Jon Hoad

Millions of years ago, on what is now a windswept corner of the northern Scottish island of Skye, some of the largest animals to have walked the Earth once plodded through a shallow coastal lagoon. Researchers have found the criss-cross of footprints left behind by sauropods, making the island the largest dinosaur site in Scotland.

"The new tracksite from Skye is one of the most remarkable dinosaur discoveries ever made in Scotland," says Steve Brusatte, who led the study

published in the *Scottish Journal of Geology*, in a statement. "There are so many tracks crossing each other that it looks like a dinosaur disco preserved in stone. By following the tracks you can walk with these dinosaurs as they waded through a lagoon 170 million years ago, when Scotland was so much warmer than today."



Images showing the positive reliefs (a), as the rock around the prints has been eroded, and the negative reliefs (b), which just look like rock pools. Brusatte et al. 2015

The discovery was made while a team of researchers from Edinburgh University were looking for other fossil remains from the middle Jurassic period, as Skye is one of the few sites in the world where finds of this age are at the surface. As the

scientists were wandering along the beach, they started to notice large, dustbin-sized potholes in the rock, filled with water and covered in seaweed.

It soon became apparent what they were looking at, as Dr. Shaena Montanari, who was not involved with study, but was part of the team when they found the footprints, explained to IFLScience: "There are some that are actually positive reliefs, and here you can see that there are four toes. If you looked even closer, some of the footprints were cut down the side,

and you could see that the sediment underneath was deformed. When the dinosaur stepped on the sand, you could see the ripples in the sand underneath it, so it wasn't just some erosional feature they'd found."

The footprints form part of a huge trackway on the beach that extends out to sea, and is covered when the tide comes in, which could help explain why it was only just noticed recently. As luck would have it, there was another group of people at the beach who had a drone, allowing them to view the prints from the air. "When you can see it from overhead, you can really see these footprints everywhere – it's pretty amazing," said Dr. Montanari. The prints have been found on multiple layers of the rock formed during the middle Jurassic, which suggests that they were left by many dinosaurs over a period of generations.

Working out exactly which sauropod species was responsible, without any other fossils to go on, is a little trickier. The researchers suspect they were early, distant relatives of more well-known species such as *Diplodocus*, and that they probably weighed in at around 10 tonnes (11 tons) and measured at least 15 meters (50 feet) long. The tracks are also useful in shedding light on the behavior ecology of the animals, as they show that rather than being entirely land-dwelling dinosaurs (as was previously assumed), they clearly waded out into coastal lagoons.

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Scared man who sued over 'haunted house' loses in court

Bob Egelko | on November 25, 2015
Monday, November 30

sfgate.com

If you visit a "haunted house" at Halloween time and come out the worse for wear, don't blame the spirits, or the owners. At least as long as whatever harm you suffered was the result of being scared out of your wits.

A state appeals court has given precedent-setting status to a ruling that gave the scary mansions the same legal status as ski lodges, bumper cars and other commercial recreational facilities: They're not responsible for injuries caused by an "inherent risk" of the activity.

In this case, the court said, that risk was the terror Scott Griffin experienced after leaving what he thought was the exit gate of the Haunted Trail, an outdoor haunted house at Balboa Park in San Diego, one evening shortly before Halloween in 2011. As he walked away, laughing with a group of friends, he said, a man turned on a gas-powered chainsaw and pointed it at him.

Griffin said he backed away, asked the man to stop, then started running, with the saw-wielder in pursuit. Griffin fell and injured his wrist.

In a lawsuit against the trail's owner, Haunted Hotel Inc., Griffin argued that the company should not have trained its actors to chase visitors beyond the marked exit. He said he had feared he was in danger — real fear, he argued, as opposed to the "fun fear" he felt inside the gate.

Haunted Hotel said the fake exit was part of the trail, and the man with the saw — which had no chain — was the park's "Carrie effect." It's a reference to the last scene in the movie "Carrie," and many other horror flicks, in which the audience is given one final scare after being led to believe their horror is over.

Lawyers for the company said its website, where Griffin had bought his ticket, showed pictures of actors holding chainsaws. In addition, an audiotape played for all visitors warned them that if they tried to run, "our creatures will chase you down like the chickens that you are."

A judge dismissed Griffin's suit, a ruling that the Fourth District Court of Appeal in San Diego upheld last month and certified Nov. 20 as a legal precedent. Unless the state Supreme Court intervenes, the decision will be binding on trial courts statewide.

The case involves "an adult who pays money to experience extreme fright, and receives exactly what he paid for," Justice Gilbert Nares said in the 3-0 ruling.

"The point of the Haunted Trail is to scare people, and the risk that someone will become scared and react by running away cannot be eliminated without changing the basic character of the activity," Nares said.

He cited past rulings dismissing suits over injuries that were found to be part of the “inherent risk” of a recreational activity — a bumper-car rider injured in a head-on collision, a patron of the Burning Man festival who tripped and fell into the remnants of the still-burning effigy.

Proprietors can be sued for unreasonably increasing the normal risks of harm, Nares said. But he said that in the three years before Griffin’s mishap, 10 to 15 other visitors had fallen while running from the man with the chainsaw, and none reported any injuries.

Griffin’s lawyer, Christopher Ardalan, said he was considering an appeal to the state Supreme Court and was consulting with his client and consumer organizations.

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Schoolgirl dies after suffering rare 'allergic reaction to WiFi'

13:11, 30 Nov 2015 Updated 23:35, 30 Nov 2015 By Alex Wellman

mirror.co.uk



INS

Tragic: Jenny suffered from a rare allergy

A teenage schoolgirl was found hanging from a tree after she began suffering from an allergic reaction to WiFi, an inquest has heard.

Tragic Jenny Fry was left with crippling headaches, tiredness and bladder problems brought on by electro-hypersensitivity (EHS).

An inquest into her death heard how the 15-year-old's mum Debra said her symptoms were caused because she was allergic to wireless internet connections at her school.

Jenny's body was found hanging from a tree at Brooke Woods, near her home in Chadlington, Oxon., at 4.20pm on June 11.

Earlier in the day she had texted a friend telling her she was not going to school that day.

Read more: Mum of 3 crushed to death after chair pins her to wall of moving lift

Her mum Debra and dad Charles Newman told the inquest they believed their daughter was made ill because of WiFi.



INS

Although they had taken the WiFi out of their own home, it was still used in Chipping Norton School, Oxon., where she was a pupil.

Mrs Fry told Oxfordshire Coroners' Court Jenny had started showing signs of EHS in November 2012.

She said: "Jenny was getting ill and so was I. I did some research and found how dangerous WiFi could be so I had it taken out of the house.

"Both Jenny and I were fine at home but Jenny continued to be ill at school in certain areas.

"She was receiving lots of detentions, not for being disruptive in class or misbehaving, but often because she used to take herself out of the classroom to find another where she was able to work. She took her schoolwork seriously.

Read more: Tragic musician killed in car crash 'after husband mistook the accelerator for the brake'

"I took lots of information into school to show the headteacher, Simon Duffy, but he said there was equally the same information available claiming WiFi was safe.

"I also had a heated exchange with teachers telling them Jenny was allergic to WiFi and that it made no sense making her take detentions in rooms that were making her ill.

Pupil: Jenny was a student at Chipping Norton School when she died



Google

"The least they could do was allow her to take them in rooms where she felt able to concentrate, but they wouldn't listen.

"I fully believe Jenny did not intend to take her own life. I think she was frustrated with school.

"She would not see a doctor but was seeing a counsellor at school who was helping her.

"She had not made any suggestions she was thinking of suicide and I believe it was a cry for help."

Jenny's parents are now campaigning to remove WiFi from nurseries and schools

and urging the government to look into researching EHS.

Mrs Fry said: "I intend to carry on my campaign to highlight the dangers of WiFi.

"I am not against a bit of technology but I do feel schools should be aware that some children are going to be sensitive to it and reduce its use.

"I think some technology is very useful. I am glad I had a mobile phone with me when I found Jenny so I was able to ring for help."

A police statement said Jenny texted a pal at 9.36am and 10.05am telling her about her intentions and stating where she was but her friend did not have her phone with her.

Recording a narrative verdict, Oxfordshire coroner Darren Salter said he was unable to rule out it was a possible cry for help because of the texts she sent to a friend.

He said there was not enough proof to suggest Jenny intended to take her own life and recorded a narrative verdict.

He added: "It can't be demonstrated to the required standard of proof that it is certain she intended to take her own life."

The inquest heard there were no medical notes to prove Jenny suffered from EHS.

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Schools continue to grapple with 'Huckleberry Finn'

Justine McDaniel, Inquirer Staff Writer
20151213

philly.com

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain (1884): One of Twain's most famous works, Huckleberry Finn has nevertheless been one of the most frequently banned and challenged books of all time, mostly because of profanity and the use of the "n-word." (Wikimedia Commons)

Last updated: Friday, December 11, 2015, 1:08 AM

After *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published in 1885, the book was boycotted in some places in the United States for portraying friendship between a black man and a white boy.

"In its time, it was derided and censored," said Deborah Caldwell-Stone, deputy director of the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, which tracks challenges to books.

Today, Mark Twain's classic - about a boy who flees his abusive father and travels down the Mississippi River with an escaped slave - is still sometimes challenged in American schools, but for nearly the opposite reason: its liberal use of the N-word and perceived racist portrayals of black characters.

This week, a Montgomery County school removed *Huckleberry Finn* from its curriculum after a group of students said the book made them uncomfortable.

After a forum for students and faculty, the administration of Friends' Central School decided to strike the book from the 11th-grade American literature class, principal Art Hall said in a letter to parents this week.

"We have all come to the conclusion that the community costs of reading this book in 11th grade outweigh the literary benefits," Hall said in his letter.

The book's use of the N-word was challenging for some students, who felt the school was not being inclusive, Hall said this week.

According to the school's website, Friends' Central is guided by Quaker philosophy, and "peaceful resolution of conflicts, seeking truth, and collaboration are key aspects of a Friends' Central education."

"I'm very proud of the process that our community engaged in to make the decision," Hall said.

The novel was the No. 5 most frequently challenged book in the country during the 1990s, according to the American Library Association (ALA), and No. 14 in the decade of the 2000s.

"It will always be an issue because it touches on a very sensitive nerve, which is America's history of racism," said Antonio Aiello, a Banned Books Week coordinator at PEN American Center, a New York-based literary association.

Hall said the book will remain in the school library. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* will be taught in the 11th-grade courses, potentially alongside a second novel.

The Wynnewood school isn't alone. *Finn* has sparked controversy at American high schools in recent years, and in 2011 a publisher made waves when it released a modified edition that removed all instances of the N-word.

Other local schools said they either teach *Huckleberry Finn* or have it on their library shelves. The West Chester Area School District, for example, often teaches it in the 11th grade. The Lower Merion district makes it available in its library.

"We don't shy away from teaching it," said Jim Miller, dean of students and an English teacher at Friends Select School. "We see it as a very important opportunity to educate kids further about the use of

language, especially the use of the N-word."

He said the classes teaching *Finn* include a unit on the N-word and encourage students to think critically about history and language. The school hasn't been challenged by parents or students about books, he said.

At Greene Street Friends School, a course of study, new this year, includes books not traditionally used in schools, a spokeswoman said, such as Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, which was the most frequently challenged book of 2014 by the ALA count.

"We don't let concerns about censoring or banned books shape" our curriculum, the spokeswoman said.

In recent years, the ALA has recorded about 300 to 400 challenges each year, Caldwell-Stone said, which represent "a snapshot" of what's happening across the country.

Removing a text from curriculum because of concerns about its content is generally considered a challenge to the book by those who track bans.

"We would still see this as a kind of censorship because there is something to be learned from this work," Caldwell-Stone said.

Hall said the choice would empower students.

"I do not believe that we're censoring. I really do believe that this is an opportunity for the school to step forward and listen to the students," he said.

jmcdaniel@philly.com

610-313-8205

CORRECTION: This article has been corrected to reflect the proper quote from Jim Miller, dean of students and an English teacher at Friends Select School.

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One remarkable symptom of scurvy, that constant bane of the Age of Discovery, was the acute and morbid heightening of the senses. Jonathan Lamb explores how this unusual effect of sailing into uncharted territory echoed a different kind of voyage, one undertaken by the Empiricists through their experiments in enhancing the senses artificially.



Page from the journal of Henry Walsh Mahon showing the effects of scurvy, from his time aboard HM Convict Ship *Barrosa* (1841-2) – Source .

When the archangel Michael in Milton's *Paradise Lost* explains to Adam that his sin cannot be purged in Paradise, but must be worked off over time in the world at large, he opens a door to discovery that is at once promising and depressing. On the one hand there is the whole earth to traverse and to exploit, and on the other Adam is reminded that he is about to infect it with the taint of mortality. Two sides of discovery are exhibited, then: the prospect of a purer knowledge waiting to be found (the route to ultimate redemption), and the awareness of a degenerate constitution ("a distemper gross to aire as gross") revealed

to Adam as a terrestrial future filled with "th' effects which thy original crime hath wrought".

The scientists who ushered in the last era of maritime exploration were charmed by the promise of discovery. Robert Hooke wrote, "And as at first, mankind fell by tasting of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, so we, their Posterity, may be in part restor'd by the same way . . . by tasting too those fruits of Natural Knowledge, that were never yet forbidden".¹ But no matter how many devices Hooke and his colleagues invented to advance this project, there was a distemper infecting all attempts to put it into practice. Scurvy.

Caused by a genetic mutation that prevents humans from synthesising vitamin C, scurvy was inevitable in long voyages of discovery where fresh food was hard to get, causing the body grossly to disintegrate and perish. The disease ensured that the sinister ambiguity of discovery, so cheerfully overlooked in Hooke's program of restoration, remained intact. If sin came into the world via knowledge and discovery could it really leave the same way? Scurvy seems to indicate, like God, that it can't; and yet there is another way in which it suggests, like Hooke, the opposite. One of its more remarkable symptoms was a morbid receptivity to sense impressions, one aligned with the preternatural sensitivity scientists were trying to excite artificially. If scurvy is construed as physical manifestation of sin – a consequence of the postlapsarian body, the offspring of illicit knowledge – it has its own interest in the processes of empirical cognition.

Sudden sounds, such as the report of a musket or a cannon, were well known to kill scorbutic sailors. Even pleasant stimuli such as a drink of fresh water, or a long-awaited taste of fruit,

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An allegory for the sense of touch, featuring Adam and Eve being ejected from the Garden. Engraving by N. de Bruyn after M. de Vos – Source: Wellcome Library.

could provoke a seizure and put an end to their lives. In his *Omoo*, Melville recalls how once

the Trades scarce filled our swooning sails; the air was languid with the aroma of a thousand strange, flowering shrubs. Upon inhaling it, one of the sick who had recently shown symptoms of scurvy, cried out in pain, and was carried below. This is no unusual effect in such cases.²

When, badly afflicted with scurvy, Bernardin de St Pierre landed on Mauritius, he was disgusted by the trees, which smelt of excrement, and flowers such as the veloutier were alluring only at a distance for the odour

“quite close is perfectly loathesome”.³ Sometimes the sensation passed the frontier from pain to pleasure, or vice versa. Here is Anders Sparrman, a scorbutic naturalist on the *Resolution* who was hunting ducks when at last he landed in New Zealand: “The blood from these warm birds which were dying in my hands, running over my fingers, excited me to a degree I had never previously experienced. . . . This filled me with amazement, but the next moment I felt frightened”.⁴

The scorbutic eye was particularly engaged, so much so that vision seemed to envelop the viewer and turn the orb of the individual organ inside out, as in this description by Pedro Fernandez de Quiros of a festival he organized after he and his scorbutic crew reached Vanuatu:

There were seen amongst the green branches so many plumes of feathers and sashes, so many pikes, halberds, javelins, bright sword-blades, spears, lances, and on the breasts so many crosses, and so much gold, and so many colours and silken dresses, and many eyes could not contain what sprung from the heart, and they shed tears of joy.⁵

Spectacular novelties such as coral grew more wonderful for Matthew Flinders as scurvy heightened the impression, turning dangerous animate rock into fascinating antiscorbutics: “We had wheat sheaves, mushrooms, stags horns, cabbage leaves, and a variety of other forms, glowing under water with vivid tints of every shade betwixt green, purple, brown, and white”.⁶ Pleasure and disgust could be aroused by the selfsame phenomenon: Johann Reinhold Forster was fascinated by the effects of phosphorescence although he believed it was caused by rotting animalcules. One hundred fifty years later years later Robert Louis Stevenson was to have the same mixed reactions to coral. The sea snakes in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* excite similar extremes of wretchedness and rapture.

In the previous century scientists had attempted various prostheses for the sense-organs designed to make the work of discovery more exact: telegraph wires to transport the voice to distant ears, hygrosopes for detecting effluvia leaking from the earth, and of course

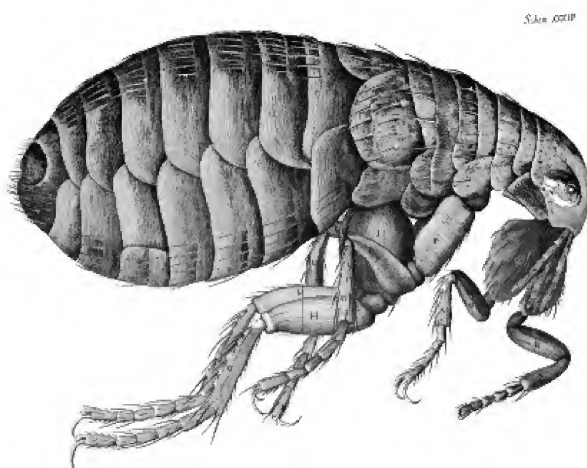


"I watched the water-snakes" (1877),
illustration by Gustave Doré for
Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*
– Source .

improved microscopes and telescopes designed to bring the infinitely small and the infinitely distant into distinct focus. Hooke's reactions to the colours and shapes of microscopic specimens were sometimes quite as ecstatic as Sparrman's, Flinders' and De Quiros', but at the same time he was able to make accurate drawings of them that had never been seen before. In this pursuit he explained how the senses were "wonderfully benefitted . . . and guided to an easie and more exact Performance of their Offices".⁷ If other people were using ships, huge machines designed to bring the unknown into the purview of the five senses, Hooke was using his own portable contrivances to arrive at what he explicitly referred to as a discovery of "new Worlds and Terra-Incognita's".⁸ His machines were the forerunners of those that accompanied Cook's supercargoes: Kendal's and Arnold's chronometers, Knight's azimuth compass, and

Bird's astronomical quadrant.

Support for Hooke was by no means unanimous. Margaret Cavendish said his instruments could never penetrate the surface of things and find out the secrets of their constitution; they only disarranged the distances, textures and angles that made them usual or comely, revealing instead the immodesties, moles, and hairs that cause the maids of honour in Brobdingnag to appear so repulsive to Gulliver. Were we to see things a thousand times more clearly, or hear things magnified at the same rate, our lives would be made intolerable, Locke argued: there would be no rest, no power of discrimination. Such a witness would live "in a quite different World from other People. Nothing would appear the same to him, and others".⁹ For Hooke, temporary alienation from the familiar world was the whole point. If a *terra incognita* was to be disclosed, then one had to act in the spirit of foreignness: "An Observer should endeavor to look upon such Experiments and Observations that are more common, and to which he has been more accusom'd, as if they were the greatest Rarity, and to imagine himself a Person of some other Country or Calling, that he never heard of, or seen the like before".¹⁰ Scurvy, you might say, helped the observer into this estranged position.



A flea as seen through a microscope, in Hooke's

By opting for the advantages of normal sense impressions, Locke and Cavendish were defending not just the proportionality and communicability of sensations, but also a very specific notion of how they are received and exchanged as ideas. Along with Descartes and Hobbes, Locke agreed that the sensory organ, while being stimulated by an object in the real world, did not take a print of it or in any way incorporate its properties. He said, "There is nothing like our Ideas in the Bodies themselves".¹¹ The smell of a flower is an event in the sensorium, created purely by the

pulsations passing between the olfactory nerve and the brain. Cavendish did not go as far as that, but she resisted the Epicurean doctrine of films and effigies as a streams of matter launched from the surface of the object at the eye, ear, or nose. Using the analogy of the mirror she said, “It is not the real body of the object which the glass presents, but the glass only figures or patterns out the picture presented in and by the glass”.¹² With this account of representation she denied Lucretius, the arch-empiricist, the indisputable evidence of impressions or any collaboration between them in the production of knowledge, for he had argued that no organ can thwart the receptivity of another. He asked, “Can th’eare, the sight denie?/ Shall th’eare, or tast, the feeling sense oppose?/ Or shall the eie, dispute against the nose?”.¹³ Cavendish retorted, “The nose knows not what the eyes see”.¹⁴

For his part, Hooke was convinced of the contrary, for it was only with the help of a microscope that the true roughness of a surface could be felt, a coalition of the prosthetized eye and the imaginary finger: “The roughness and smoothness of a Body is made much more sensible by the help of a Microscope, than by the most tender and delicate Hand”.¹⁵ Walter Charleton, the greatest authority on scurvy and nutrition in the seventeenth century, noticed that under the pressure of great stimuli the eye will engross the functions of other senses, resulting in the kind of imminent synaesthesia Addison vouched for in his essays of the pleasures of imagination when he observed that an appetent eye experiences sight as a “more delicate and diffusive Kind of Touch”.¹⁶ Coleridge was fascinated by this phenomenon. He called it the double touch (“touch . . . co-present with vision, yet not coalescing”) and wondered “whether the Skin be not a Terra Incognita in Medicine”.¹⁷



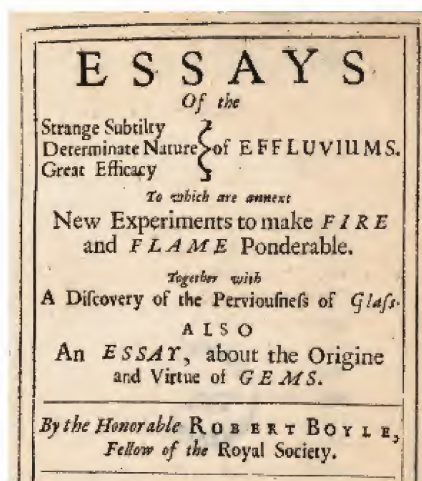
A female figure feeling an arrow with her finger; representing the sense of touch. Mezzotint by A. Vanhacken after J. Amiconi – Source: Wellcome Library .

From the beginning of this debate, the issue of enlarged sensations had calqued upon questions of disease. If you could smell too much like Bernardin de St Pierre and Melville's sailor, or have your eyes dazzle with the colours of serpents, like the Ancient Mariner, then life was not only lived in a foreign place, that place was a hospital. Supposing that it might be possible to sense too much, and out of that superfluity for one organ to seize on the function of another, Francis Hutcheson had concluded such a condition to be inconsistent with providential mercy (“Senses incapable of bearing the surrounding Objects without Pain; Eyes pained with the Light; a Palate offended with the Fruits of the Earth; a Skin as tender as the Coats of the Eye”).¹⁸ But of course what he had done was to reject as improbable the very scenes of scorbutic distress widely reported in contemporary journals. In his *Essay on Man* Pope similarly excludes a list of morbid susceptibilities as exorbitant to the divine plan, concluding with the figment of a man so tender he shrieks at the smell of a flower, as Melville's sailor was actually heard to do:

Say what the use, were finer optics given,
T'inspect a mite, not comprehend the heaven?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonise at every pore?

Or quick effluvia darting through the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?

Approaching the matter of acute sensation from a different angle, Robert Boyle saw a very useful connexion between disease and extraordinary powers of perception. In his essays on effluvia he mentions several examples, some of an innate susceptibility (the lady who swoons at the smell of roses) and some of a valuable acquisition of sensibility after an illness. A man who recovered from bubonic plague found himself able to smell an infected person before any signs of the pestilence had appeared; another who suffered inflammation of the eyes and afterwards could distinguish colours in the dark; a physician who fell sick of a fever and discovered he could now overhear whispered speech at a great distance.¹⁹ Boyle's explanation for these accidental improvements of the subtlety of the senses stems from his belief that effluvia do not bounce off the body, but pierce it and, by affecting its sensory equipment, alter the organs of the body that influence subsequent reactions to their environment. So from a blind and involuntary susceptibility, the body's organs may advance to an alertness that is active and what Bacon would call ejaculative or emittent. From this superlative awareness of effluvia, Boyle supposes such a degree of potential discrimination that the size, shape, motion, and colour of effluvia themselves might become perceptible. So by means of the variations in the internal constitution of the living engine (as Boyle calls the body) he aims at the discovery of an invisible world of particles, just as Hooke with his machines goes in search of a terra incognita in the bottom of a microscope, or Coleridge beneath the porous surface of the skin.



Detail from title page of Boyle's *Essays of the Strange Subtily, Great Efficacy, Determinate Nature of Effluvia* – Source: Wellcome Library.

Is scurvy such a disease, capable of prostrating the body and then redeeming it with enhanced perceptions? Walter Charleton and Thomas Willis, Boyle's contemporaries and authors of books on scurvy, offered some account of how this might happen. For both men the healthy state of the sensitive soul resembled Boyle's idea of the action and reaction of effluvia. Willis called it dilation or irradiation, Charleton named it corroboration. It occurs when something powerfully imagined actually takes place:

We imagine the Drinking of excellent Wine, with a certain Pleasure, then we indulge it; the Imagination of its Pleasure is again sharpened by the taste, and then by a reflected Appetite drinking is repeated. So as it were in a Circle, the Throat or Appetite provokes the Sensation, and the Sensation causes the Appetite to be sharpened, and iterated".²⁰

This corroboration of an image by the addition of a sensation is to be compared with the fixations of the scorbutic imagination observed by Thomas Trotter:

The cravings of appetite, not only amuse their waking hours with thoughts on green fields, and streams of pure water; but in their dreams they are tantalized by

the favourite idea; and on waking the mortifying disappointment is expressed with the utmost regret, with groans, and weeping, altogether childish".²¹

But then when the desideratum is materialized, what a remarkable shift from miserable privation to intense pleasure! "The patient in the inveterate stage of the disease seems to gather strength even from the sight of fruit: the spirits are exhilarated by the taste itself, and the juice is swallowed, with emotions of the most voluptuous luxury".²² John Mitchel, an Irish political prisoner en route for Tasmania aboard a scorbutic transport, wished never to forget the "brutal rapture" with which he devoured six oranges when the ship landed in Pernambuco. There is a gentler example of corroboration when the parched Ancient Mariner wakes from a dream of drinking to find his thirst quenched by the rain falling on his bare skin: "Sure I had drunken in my dreams,/ And still my body drank."



"The rain poured down from one black cloud" (1877), detail from an illustration by Gustave Doré for Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* – Source .

If we bear this in mind when reviewing one of the great junctions in the history of scurvy and science, Humphry Davy's tests on nitrous oxide at the Pneumatic Institute in 1799, an unmistakable resemblance seems to take place between the excitements of a scorbutic seaman and the sensations induced by laughing gas in Davy's fingers, eyes, and ears. He made and inhaled the gas in order to test a theory that "azote oxyd," as it was called by Samuel Mitchill (whose theory it was), acted as the source of all contagious diseases including scurvy. While finding that he did not succumb to scurvy or any other malady, Davy did find himself changed in ways a scorbutic sailor or a Royal Scientist might recognize:

I imagined that I had increased sensibility of touch: my fingers were pained by anything rough . . . I was certainly more irritable, and felt more acutely from trifling circumstances . . . My visible impressions were dazzling and apparently magnified . . . when I have breathed it amidst noise, the sense of hearing has been painfully affected even by moderate intensity of sound".²³

At the limit of sensory irritation Davy had discovered that there was no difference between suffering the impression of an object and imagining it. Like Condillac's statue, he could not tell the difference between passivity and activity, "between a cause within, and a cause without".²⁴ At this pitch both were the same, and the consequence was remarkable, explained by Mike Jay as follows: "[Davy's] culminating experiment had proved, as nothing ever had before, that an altered sensory and mental frame had the power to generate an entirely different universe".²⁵

Was this universe Boyle's invisible world? Hooke's terra incognita? The corroborative assignation with fresh fruit on a desert island? Probably not, for it was experienced, as Coleridge himself was aware from his experiments with opium and laughing gas, with all sense of "outness" lost: and then, as he says, "What a horrid disease very moment would

become".²⁶ Scurvy was a terrible affliction but was not that kind of distemper. It maintained some link with the real, for no matter how foreign and extravagant it might appear in a dream, it was an authentic message from the body to the imagination to which the imagination and the will did their best to respond. Erasmus Darwin called reveries and delusions resulting in total disobedience to external stimuli "diseases of volition," and we can conclude that scurvy was not of that genus because its morbid sensory alertness preserved (no matter how obliquely) some kind of faith with the empiricist principles that shadowed its history.

Jonathan Lamb is the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow of the Humanities at Vanderbilt University, currently on a Guggenheim Fellowship in Britain where he is writing a book titled *Scurvy: The Disease of Discovery*. His most recent books are *The Things Things Say*

, published last year by Princeton University Press, and *The Evolution of Sympathy*, (Pickering and Chatto, 2009).

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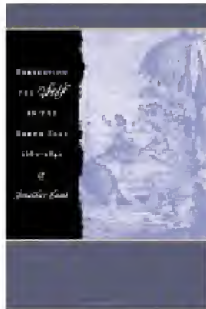
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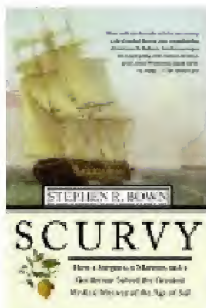
Further Reading



Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840 (*University Of Chicago Press*, 2001)

by Jonathan Lamb

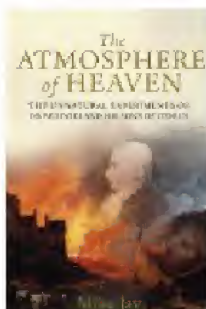
Lamb delves into the writings of South Seas explorers, illuminating the European age of exploration through the distracted and infatuated feelings of the explorers themselves, as well as the contemporary audience's interest in their narratives.



Scurvy: How a Surgeon, a Mariner, and a Gentleman Solved the Greatest Medical Mystery of the Age of Sail (*St. Martin's Griffin*, 2005)

by Stephen R. Bown

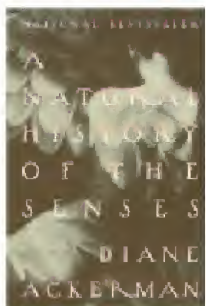
The cure for scurvy saved lives and changed the course of sea battles. In this book – a fusion of history and adventure story – Brown tells of how James Lind, James Cook, and Gilbert Blane worked to eradicate scurvy.



The Atmosphere of Heaven: The Unnatural Experiments of Dr Beddoes and His Sons of Genius (*Yale University Press*, 2010)

by Mike Jay

An exploration into the fascinating history of how 18th-century experiments into nitrous oxide (AKA laughing gas) led to improvements in anesthetic surgery and influenced our modern drug culture.



A Natural History of the Senses (*Vintage*, 1991)

by Diane Ackerman

Ackerman takes us on a grand multi-disciplinary tour in which philosophy and physiology come together in a series of essays exploring the five senses.

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UPDATE: 'Feral' killer seagull 'munching' through Plumstead pigeon population

Tuesday 30 June 2015

newsshopper.co.uk



The seagull may have looked like this

A 'feral' killer seagull has been butchering Plumstead pigeons before feasting on their dead bodies, it is claimed.

Residents near Plumstead Common claim the violent bird has been picking off an average of four unfortunate pigeons per day.

Aine McGrillen raised the alarm on the Plumstead People Facebook page, saying: "We are trying to figure out if it is just one feral seagull or if this is a group of them. Is this usual seagull behaviour?"

She wrote: "It killed one in Barnfield Gardens car park this morning, then flew off with it in its beak. Imagine if that dropped on your head!"

"I guess it is just nature doing its survival thing. It is quite tense when you watch it just hanging out with the pigeons, casual as anything and then

he picks his mark and swoops in."



News Shopper.

Stock image of a seagull killing a pigeon

Other neighbours claimed the bloodthirsty bird has a voracious appetite and has been menacing the bird population for several years, once "munching" through 10 in one night.

Kirsty Wilson wrote: "It was doing it a couple weeks back and killed about 10 in one night."

"For 3-5 days every morning when I'd leave for work at 5 I'd see him there, then when I returned still be there, just munching away at the pigeons! Never seen such a sight before."

And Emma Ledgerwood chimed in: "It's been doing it for over two years and kills at least four pigeons a day."

"It's awful to watch for the pigeons' sake but I suppose it's all nature's ways of keeping the population down."

But Gordon Guthrie had little sympathy for the pigeons. He wrote: "Seagulls are carnivores. What is worse when you're at the seaside and they pinch the kiddies' ice cream or stalk you for chips."

This is not the first time a killer seagull has made headlines. Last October a Hyde Park bird was accused of drowning pigeons in the Serpentine before devouring them.

Amateur photographer Johanna van de Woestijne, 57, told Mail Online: "It was one of the most violent things I have ever seen. After it happened I felt I had witnessed a murder.

"I've seen him hunting pigeons on two separate days, both times he picked them off, dragged them into the lake and drowned them."

**Have you seen the scary seagull? Call the newsroom on or email
mchandler@london.newsquest.co.uk**

ripnetuk 1:47pm Mon 29 Jun 15

Oh dear... where to start? nature eats nature shocker? redefinition of homicidal (which means to kill a HUMAN - not sure when pigeons got upgraded)
silly story!

concerned.erith 2:32pm Mon 29 Jun 15

Why do you think Alfred Hitchcock used them in The Birds. They're not scared to dive bomb people too - just google the attacks in Devon. They dive bomb for any food that's why the Carling advert on the tell is funny. We get our revenge on them.

PenzancePirate 3:18pm Mon 29 Jun 15

All seagulls are feral - wouldn't it be an idea to check these things before going to print. I suppose the seagull in the Hastings Direct ads could be classed as domesticated though ...

Gypo.Joe 7:20pm Mon 29 Jun 15

Barnfield Gardensoh yea boi™. Need I say it It's the CTs, ifin ya know wots I means. They're all liars. Gypo.Joe

Barnfield Gardensoh yea boi™.

Need I say it

It's the CTs, ifin ya know wots I means.

They're all liars.

Witchkid 5:23am Tue 30 Jun 15

If this picture is a guide, the gull could well be a Great Black-Backed gull, which feeds on shellfish, birds and carrion. This bird is probably taking more pigeons than usual because it has chicks to feed. Feral pigeons breed all year round, even during the winter. This is because they are a food source for many species of bird, including gulls. I wonder how long it will be before NS starts referring to other predatory birds. like sparrowhawks, peregrines etc,

as 'feral killers'? Yet another ignorant and sensationalist article from NS!

Gypo.Joe 11:38am Tue 30 Jun 15

Wots gorn on now boi™.

We don't like change.

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What Horrors Lurk Inside Seely's Castle in Asheville, NC?

cultofweird.com

Some people believe the imposing brick walls of Seely's Castle in Asheville, NC hold terrible secrets from it's evil past.



Seely's Castle in Asheville, NC

What horrors lurk inside Seely's Castle?

The history of Seely's Castle, also known as the Overlook Mansion, in Asheville, North Carolina is steeped in rumors of dark and disturbing affairs befitting of a place long reputed to be a location for the satanic rituals and sacrifices of the "rich, elite and powerful" satanists that populate Asheville and the surrounding region.



Seelys Castle, also known as Overlook Mansion

It seems that little is known about the castle,

considering its age. It was built in 1912-1914 for Fred Loring Seely on ten acres at the top of Sunset Mountain. It has seen five known owners.

The Seelys lived there until Mr. Seely's death in 1942 at age 70. In 1949 his wife, Evelyn Grove Seely, whose father had given them the land, sold the castle to Asheville-Biltmore College, who occupied the property until they outgrew it in 1961. The third owner was Mr. Jerry Sternberg, who made several improvements with plans to open it as a museum, which he never achieved. He then turned the property over to Overlook Christian Ministries in the late 1970s. Overlook was a full gospel ministry that believed in speaking in tongues and other gifts of the Pentecost, which some claim may be the root of the rumors of satanism. The owners of Overlook wrote a book about their ministry called *A Castle in the Kingdom*.

The castle was acquired by the Wells family in 1984, who seem to be the last known owners,

though another rumor claims executives of BonWorth purchased the castle from the Overlook ministry as a retreat.



Seely Overlook Castle in Asheville, North Carolina

Among its many amazing features are the Jacobean ceilings, stained glass windows and a huge, two-story library with balcony in the north tower, which includes an entire wall made of glass with a panoramic view of Asheville. Besides its many secret passages, it is said there is a room hidden behind the library's fire place, with soot-covered windows on the outside but no known access. The original wooden doors removed in the 1960s depicted the 12 Canterbury tales.

The lions on each side of the tunnel entrance were apparently at the courthouse in Atlanta when Sherman's army marched through during the Civil War.



Concrete lions at the entrance of Seely's Castle

Located at 710 Town Mountain Rd. (map), a drive said to be adorned with the mansions of the area's rich and powerful, Seely's Castle can only be glimpsed through the woods from a distance, or at the entrance guarded by metal gates and surveillance cameras. It is said the castle is inhabited by a *religious order*, and no visitors are allowed through the gates.

Read about some of the alleged **Satanic rituals and human sacrifices** at Seely's Castle in Pam Schuffert's 2001 article *Satanism in America Today*.

28 Comments

1. Mèlonie

November 30, 2015 at 7:06 am

Does anybody know details of the inside ? How many bedrooms ? Is it only two stories ? Is there a large fireplace in each room ? Is there a basement ? How many secret rooms ? What about formal rooms such as a ball-room maybe for

entertaining guests with dance's and such in the early yrs ?? Etc etc etc.



Seely's castle

Site Number Five



Seely Overlook castle as Biltmore college

2. Bob L.

November 29, 2015 at 7:54 pm

Pam Schuffert's 2001 so-called article, "Satanism in America Today", is a complete crock, concocted by a brainless and hopeless mentality that is entirely controlled by fear and ignorance. Christ has a few things to say about such fear and hopelessness, yet many self-described Christians seem to completely ignore many of these teachings. WWJD? Think about it, and LIVE accordingly.



Seely Overlook castle 1920

3. Tone Loc

February 25, 2015 at 10:00 am

Speaking in tongues is not necessarily satanic, although it can be. On the day of Pentecost, after Jesus arose from the dead and ascended to Heaven, the Scriptures tell us the Holy Ghost landed on



Seely Overlook castle

the people in the "Upper Room" and they started speaking in tongues. Tongues is actually a real language the person does not know, yet is able to speak fluently. The book of Acts tells us this. I Corinthians 12 lists the gifts of the Holy Ghost. One of those is speaking in tongues. Paul told us "When my spirit prays, my understanding is unfruitful". This means his spirit is speaking with God in a tongue unknown to him. So, if a Pentecostal Christian is speaking in tongues, it should not be viewed as a satanic practice.

• Alexandra

March 9, 2015 at 5:25 pm

Not so. What happened on the day of Pentecost was that the apostles spoke in their language, and everyone listening heard it in **their** language. Think "universal translator" in the "Star Trek" series. Kind of like that...if I'm speaking English and a Mexican person hears it in Spanish...it was like that.

- Elizabeth

November 30, 2015 at 1:55 pm

Agree!

4. Becky Seeley Limbaugh

October 5, 2014 at 9:54 pm

I've always known about the old "family castle", but never suspected such a colorful history! #Related

- Becky Seeley Limbaugh

October 6, 2014 at 11:43 am

Forgot to mention that family legend states the stones they built it from were brought over from Scotland. True or false, I don't know.

- Sandy

July 14, 2015 at 8:40 pm

Becky Seeley Limbaugh

I heard the same thing about the stones from Scotland. Such a rich and wonderful history. I would love to interview you someday if you would allow me to do so. My cell # is 9707798009. If you're interested, please send a text.

5. Martha Culler

December 26, 2013 at 6:45 pm

I did live in the "Castle" in 1979/1980...My son was born in the upper room on the right in the front picture of the castle. The owners at that time did have a Christian church that met in part of the castle. We lived in a part and the owners lived in another part. The church people were good Christian people and never heard a story of "satanic ritual" until I met someone from Asheville that moved here to S.C. about 10 years ago. For the short time we were there we had a good life. My son was born in June of 1980. What child can say he was born in a castle???? It was beautiful on that part of the mountain and we would see red foxes come up to the house all the time. What a good memory!!

- Elliot

May 27, 2014 at 4:37 pm

did they teach you English... needs work.. two spaces after periods.

- Suz

July 18, 2015 at 10:07 am

Okay, Mr. Oxford Comma, way to be a total ass. Thank you, Ms. Culler for sharing your first hand experience. Such an interesting legacy for your son!

- Nadia Acosta Hickerson

July 19, 2015 at 12:11 pm

Chicago, AP and MLA formats all suggest using 1 space after a punctuation mark. So Martha Culler is correct.

- Bob L.

November 29, 2015 at 7:36 pm

Where did you learn your English, Mr. Elliot? How about using correct punctuation, yourself, if you feel that your idea of proper English needs to be rudely rammed down someone's throat, and in a context that is entirely inappropriate? By the way, you MIGHT note that I've added a "question mark" at the end of my question! You might also better educate yourself regarding the usage of "... ", as well as ".. (sic), which is entirely incorrect within your (did I already state this?) rude response.

- Scott

December 9, 2015 at 8:13 am

You're a fucking dumbass. I have a graduate degree in English and using two spaces after a period is NEVER done.

- Allen Patton

August 6, 2014 at 7:51 pm

Who owns castle now?

- Cecilia Rhymer

November 28, 2015 at 7:37 am

Martha Culler. I am sitting here amazed by what you just wrote! I was 16 in 1980 and was looking for a car. I can't remember how we come to find the ad about a 1974 Nova. But it was at Seely's Castle. I was excited about seeing the car but also about seeing the Castle! I remember we were looking at the car and someone stuck their head out of one of the top windows and yelled "it's a Boy'!! That was around 35-36 yrs ago and I remember it like it was yesterday. I am so

glad that I read your comment!

■ Jessica

December 7, 2015 at 6:31 pm

Cecilia Rhymer: I am sitting here AMAZED at life and synchronicity. Thanks for sharing your story!

• David

November 29, 2015 at 10:29 pm

I was born fall of that yr there

• Mélonie

November 30, 2015 at 6:52 am

That's a wonderful memory Martha. May I ask why you moved out ? It would have been an awesome place to stay and raise a boy. Ohh the life stories he could have told.

6. Wanda Jones

October 30, 2013 at 1:28 am

This is absolutely absurd! Satanism at Seely's Castle. Who ever wrote that should be ashamed. I went to school with a girl who was part of Overlook Christian Ministry. I did think her family was a bit overzealous about avoiding 'sin' but it wasn't a cult, just a bit too Pentecostal for my Southern Baptist's tastes. Why not write about a spot in Asheville that was really popular? How about the fellas who roamed the streets around Grove Park Arcade in the 1980s-1990's? Used to be a genuine pick up spot for gay men – now it's a posh place to eat and shop. Or, there was always a little place called 'Sandy Bottoms', and another little park near the bus garage and transfer station off Brevard Road. Remember My Brother's Mustache, a popular gay bar, and O. Henry's pub. And for the ladies, check out Malaprop's book store. See, Asheville's past is steeped in lore about the relationships between the leaders of the town and some important historical figures, such as Thomas Edison, Firestone, Ford. Fred Seely was rumored to have been a member of the Masonic Lodge. Perhaps it's no accident that Asheville has always been accommodating and tolerant of people who are 'different'. I'm not sayin.... but, you know, the photos are on the walls of the Grove Park Inn, drive by and see them sometime...

• C. Randolph

February 18, 2015 at 1:55 am

missing the connection between possible Satan worship at Seely's Castle and guys looking to get their rocks off downtown...

- Suz

July 18, 2015 at 10:11 am

And this is "weird" how? Cult of Weird is about urban legend and stories of the odd and stories that often get started and passed down from family to family of the spooky and supernatural.

7. peter moss

October 3, 2012 at 12:49 pm

Wells bought the place and spent much time fixing the place up.
Glad someone with means got it so
it will not be pile of rocks like so
many English castles are today.
Shop BONWORTH and support Seely's castle restoration.

8. Greg Ness

July 3, 2012 at 9:48 pm

Loren W. Wells (CEO of Bon Worth) to be more specific, and his choice of 12 foot high barbed wired fencing surrounding the property is very tasteful.

- Michael

November 29, 2015 at 7:29 am

people this day and age don't know boundaries unless you make it 12' high with barbed wire.
that's all thanks to vandals and vagrants. especially these days when the general population doesn't have morals or thoughts of anything other than self. sadly that's whats happening to this world. technology has propelled peoples knowledge into the future by having anything they could want at the tips of their fingers, but never having to work to earn it makes it lose some of its hard earned value.
I think that is why people build up walls and fences.

9. Zelda Schmelda

June 22, 2012 at 1:46 am

That castle is supposed to be mine.

- Sandy

July 14, 2015 at 8:43 pm

We're you supposed to inherit it?

10. JJF13

May 23, 2012 at 2:17 am

This is not owned by any type of religious order. It is privately owned by Mr. and Mrs. Wells. Mr. Wells is the owner or one of the higher ups of Bon Worth. It is his private estate.

Cult of Weird is an online museum of the bizarre, serving weird news and oddities to thousands of curious and macabre minds every day. Have you been initiated?

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Shakespeare's kitchen discovered in Stratford-upon-Avon dig - BBC News

bbc.com

• 27 November 2015



Shakespeare's kitchen hearth and cold storage pit were unearthed in the dig at New Place

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

Shakespeare's kitchen, including a hearth and cold storage pit, has been discovered by archaeologists digging up the playwright's home in Stratford-upon-Avon.

New Place, which was bought by Shakespeare in 1597, was the largest single dwelling in the town.

gallery, more than 20 rooms and 10 fireplaces.

The dig, led by Staffordshire University's Centre of Archaeology, also found evidence of a brew house.

Fragments of plates, cups and other cookware were also found at New Place, where Shakespeare lived for 19 years of his adult life.

It had a great chamber and



A well was also uncovered at New Place, where Shakespeare lived for 19 years

Image copyright Shakespeare Birthplace Trust
Image caption

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) charity said the dig helped reveal "the living, breathing man behind the great works - husband, father and son of Stratford".

The findings also enabled the SBT to commission new evidence-based drawings of

New Place, which depict an accurate version of how the house would have looked during Shakespeare's ownership.

Dr Paul Edmondson from the SBT, said, "Once we had uncovered the family's oven we were

able to understand how the rest of the house fitted around it.

"The discovery of the cooking areas, brew house, pantry and cold storage pit, combined with the scale of the house, all point to New Place as a working home as well as a house of high social status.

"At New Place we can catch glimpses of Shakespeare the playwright and country-town gentleman. His main task was to write and a house as impressive as New Place would have played an important part in the rhythm of his working life."

The New Place site will be opened to the public by the SBT in the summer of 2016 as part of celebrations to mark 400 years since the dramatist's death, and will feature rare artefacts on display for the first time.

The £5.25m project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England and through public donations.

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Image copyright Phil Watson, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

Should you drink coffee if it washes ashore on a Florida beach? (Asking for a friend.)

By Sarah Larimer

December 9 at 11:26 AM

washingtonpost.com



Thousands of cans and vacuum-packed bricks of Cafe Bustelo brand coffee washed up on Florida beaches on Tuesday. (Tim Shortt/Florida Today via AP)

Here is what Laurie Cus saw when she scanned a Florida beach on Tuesday: coffee.

I'm talking about a lot of coffee, guys. Coffee "as far as the eye could see even with binoculars," Cus told ABC News.

As far as the eye could see!

"I haven't seen anything like this since I've been here, and I've lived here for 10 years," Cus told ABC. "I just woke up and saw all these yellow things, what seemed like thousands of them, scattered across the beach."

The "yellow things" were canisters of Cafe Bustelo coffee, which had washed up on the shores, according to various news outlets. The canisters were later collected by residents and visitors, who apparently believe that a different version of the five-second rule applies to beaches.

From ABC News:

Cus said that the debris was cleared within two hours of her seeing it in the early morning.

Dozens of locals and tourists "scavenged" for the coffee can and packages, much of which were sealed and "usable," she said.

The Indialantic public works department also helped clear the beach and donated most of the coffee to a local charity for the homeless, according to Indialantic Police Department Staff Sgt. TW Baker, Sr.

"These containers all seem to be sealed," Leon Stein, of Indialantic, told Florida Today. "We live right on the ocean. We routinely walk the beach with bags but this is thousands of containers. It looks usable."

(?!?!?!?!?!?!?)

(Does it????)

In a statement emailed to The Washington Post on Wednesday, a company spokeswoman said the coffee had fallen off a shipping vessel “as result of rough weather conditions.”

“We recommend that consumers dispose of any Cafe Bustelo product that may have washed ashore as the product/packing is likely to have been compromised,” the statement noted.

After the beached coffee was reported, authorities responded to the scene, including a couple of U.S. Coast Guard investigators, who walked the sands, according to Florida Today.

“This is very unusual,” Elvin Rodriguez, a marine science technician with the Coast Guard, told the newspaper.

Rodriguez said the investigators were checking to “checking to make sure it’s nothing else but coffee.”

“I came out early this morning and saw it,” Chris Sybo, who is visiting the state for his daughter’s graduation, told Florida Today. “I went back and told a worker and said you ought to see the beach.

“It’s like Christmas coffee.”

- washingtonpost.com
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SKULL THEFT FEUD: York travellers' site & 4 others raided, 7 arrests made, sub-machine guns seized - UPDATED

Thursday 26 November 2015

yorkpress.co.uk



Officers at a traveler site in West Rainton

Officers at a traveler site in West Rainton

POLICE have raided a travellers' site in York as part of a huge operation aimed at ending an escalating gipsy feud.

Officers across six police force areas were involved in dawn raids today, arresting seven people and seizing weapons.

Police confirmed that two submachine guns and ammunition had been found during a raid at a traveller site in Doncaster. A pistol was also found along with shotgun ammunition.

The feud has already seen two skulls taken from the graves of a traveller family in County Durham, stolen lorries rammed into two homes in the Darlington area and a petrol bomb attack on a third house in the town.



York Press:

Police on the raid in Gateshead

The coordinated operation - codenamed Zepher - is being led by Durham Constabulary and involves 150 officers across the force areas of Durham, Northumbria, Cleveland, North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire.

This morning's raids have centred on:

- A traveller site in Doncaster
- An address in Middlesbrough

- An traveller site in York
- A traveller site at West Rainton, near Durham
- A traveller site at Oakwell Park, Gateshead - next to The Baltic

Police at a traveler site in West Rainton

Detective Superintendent Adrian Green, who is leading the operation, confirmed arrests had been made and weapons and vehicles seized as part of the raids.

He issued a direct appeal to those involved to return the skulls from the desecrated graves from Metal Bridge cemetery, near Spennymoor.

"I would appeal to whoever has taken the skulls, that time is running out. Please call 101 or Crimestoppers and let me know where they are."



York Press:

Officers arrived at West Rainton to conduct a search for the skulls - which have yet to be uncovered. No arrests have been made or items seized at the site.

A gun seized in one of the raids

Chief Inspector Caroline Dawson told The Press's sister paper, The Northern Echo: "This is not about targeting travellers, this is about targeting a particular group that happens to be within the travelling community that are causing all these problems."

"It is not clear what the argument is about between these groups is about but we are clear who is involved."

"We will do whatever we can within our powers to stop them."

"Our priority is to find the skulls. Most members of the travelling community are shocked by the incidents. They can't believe this would happen within their own community."



York Press:



York Press:

Ammunition seized in South Yorkshire

Up to 35 officers from Northumbria Police visited the well-established traveller's site at Oakwell Park on Baltic Road, Gateshead, which is currently home to 15 caravans.

A search was carried out for the missing skulls there and one vehicle was seized as part of the investigation. No arrests were made.

Inspector Mick Robson, of Northumbria Police, said; "The residents were very co-operative. We are happy with the progress of our operation this morning."

The desecration of the remains of two teenage brothers Levi George and Gareth Price, was branded as "depraved" by police - who confirmed at the time it was connected to the ongoing feud among travelling



York Press:



York Press:



York Press:

families.

The skulls of the boys, both 16 when they took their own lives, were taken as part of a "focused and targeted" attack early on Saturday morning.

Levi Price, left, and his brother Gareth Price, whose skulls were stolen in what police described as a 'depraved act' Metal Bridge Cemetery, near Ferryhill

Levi George Price was found hanged at the family home in Ferryhill, County Durham, in 2001, and his brother Gareth Price hanged himself in Lancaster Farms Young Offenders' Institution while waiting to be sentenced for the rape of a 17-year-old girl.

The grave of their sister Rose Ann Price was undisturbed. The mother-of-two died after a car crash while travelling from Doncaster to Ferryhill in 2001 to spend bonfire night with her family.

It was revealed last night that four people from the Doncaster area were arrested by North Yorkshire Police on Monday in connection with the feud.

They have since been charged with conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm and have been transferred to custody in the South Yorkshire Police area.

A key figure in the region's traveller community has already called for an end to the "senseless" attacks.

Comments are closed on this article.

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W. H. ...
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Son of missing UK Lord Lucan asks for death certificate

yahoo.com



George Bingham arrives at the Royal Courts of Justice in London for a hearing over his application to obtain a death certificate for his father, Tuesday Dec. 8, 2015. Bingham the son of English aristocrat Lord Lucan who disappeared after his children's nanny was bludgeoned to death four decades ago — has asked Britain's High Court to issue a death certificate so he can inherit his father's title. (Lauren Hurley/PA via AP) UNITED KINGDOM OUT

George Bingham arrives at the Royal Courts of Justice in London for a hearing over his application to obtain a death certificate for his father, Tuesday Dec. 8, 2015. Bingham the son of English aristocrat Lord Lucan who disappeared after his children's nanny was bludgeoned to death four decades ago — has asked Britain's High Court to issue a death certificate so he can inherit his father's title. (Lauren Hurley/PA via AP) UNITED KINGDOM OUT

LONDON (AP) — The son of English aristocrat Lord Lucan — who disappeared after his children's nanny was bludgeoned to death four decades ago — has asked Britain's High Court to issue a death certificate so he can inherit his father's title.

The son, George Bingham, wants to become the Eighth Earl of Lucan.

His father, Richard John Bingham, the Seventh Earl, vanished after nanny Sandra Rivett was found dead at the family's London home on Nov. 7, 1974. Lucan's wife, Veronica, was hit in the head repeatedly when she ran downstairs to investigate.

Lord Lucan's bloodstained car was later found abandoned near England's south coast.

In 1975, an inquest jury declared him Rivett's killer. Detectives believe the aristocrat — a heavy gambler nicknamed "Lucky Lucan" — intended to murder his wife and killed the nanny by mistake.

The mystery of Lord Lucan's disappearance still intrigues Britain. Many believe he drowned himself in the English Channel soon after the killing, and the High Court declared him dead for probate purposes in 1999. But there have been scores of reported sightings around the world, in countries including Australia, Ireland, South Africa and New Zealand.

Bingham says the 1999 ruling didn't prove death "for all purposes." His new application, which the court began considering Tuesday, had been opposed by Rivett's son, Neil Berriman.

Berriman has said that Lord Lucan, who would be 80 today, may still be alive and if so should

be prosecuted for his mother's murder.

Bingham's lawyer, Michael Bloch, told Tuesday's court hearing that Berriman no longer objected to the orders sought, "but his concerns as to historical matters remain as sensitive as ever."

A senior court official, Paul Teverson, said the case would be heard in full in February or March. He gave Berriman permission to participate.

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Son sues Chigwedere over goblins | The Chronicle

December 9, 2015

chronicle.co.zw

December 4, 2015



Cde Chigwedere

Takunda Maodza Harare Bureau
FORMER Education Minister and Mashonaland East Governor Cde Aeneas Chigwedere is being sued by his son for allegedly practising witchcraft and possessing goblins that have reportedly terrorised the whole clan.

According to papers filed at the Harare Civil Courts by his son Magwiza Chigwedere yesterday, Cde Chigwedere is alleged to have caused untold suffering to

his children and the extended family.

Also being sued is Cde Chigwedere's wife Emilia Zharare Chigwedere – stepmother to Magwiza.

The Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association (Zinatha) has also been cited as third respondent.

Magwiza wants Zinatha to use its expertise to rid the family of the goblins.

"This is an application Applicant makes against the respondents in terms of Sections 97 (a) (1), 98 (2) of Chapter V of the Code and Sections 16 (1), 19 (1), 2 (c), 3 (b) (ii) and 20 (1) (e), Section 83 (b)(c) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) Act 2013 for indulging in non natural and uncultural practices to instill fear in family members, cause injury and or death, cause disease and or disability and condemn the said family members to abject poverty.

"The facts I depose of to hereunder are to the best of my knowledge true and correct reflections of what has transpired and still transpires," said Magwiza in his founding affidavit.

He accused his father and stepmother of possessing goblins which they allegedly unleash on other family members.

Magwiza alleges the victims are fleeing Hwedza to seek refuge elsewhere.

"First and second respondents – Aeneas Chigwedere and Emilia Zharare Chigwedere – possess goblins which have created untold hardships within the Chigwedere clan resulting in many clan members adopting different nomenclature to avoid association with first and

second respondents or to flee their roots in Hwedza to unknown destinations hoping the goblins will not catch up with them. All this in futility.”

Adds Magwiza: “First respondent is also in possession of two pieces of ivory on one of which names of clan existing, and family members and those deceased are inscribed in pencil. The one with names has been concealed and only the blank one remains now.”

Magwiza alleged the Chigwedere clan has lost a number of members because of the actions of his father.

“Female members of our clan cannot marry or if they do, many do not conceive. Some have been married for 17 years but have failed to find the fecundity during such a long period, no matter how hard they try consultatively. Those who conceive remain in the clan as wives of the goblins. Broken homes, broken marriages, lost dreams, lost lives characterises the clan,” he said.

Magwiza further claims his father performs bizarre and fiendish rituals on other family members’ off-spring.

Chigwedere allegedly sits the relatives “on reed-mats, getting them to hold crookedly carved wands and getting them to gulp the brew”.

“Due to the quasi-supernatural powers vested in him by the goblins and his physical presence and stature, First respondent gathers the whole clan at his residence fills a dish with porridge concocted with herbs. First respondent then makes deep cicatrices (nyora) on the little finger of each and everyone present drop blood and then scoop the porridge and eat it using that bleeding little finger. This was done in order of seniority down to those little ones who were still being breast fed. At every end he remained with a dish full of blood droppings from everybody present,” claimed Magwiza.

He accuses his father of performing numerous strange rituals annually “on the pretext that those are done to appease our ancestral spirits — yet in fact they are done to please the goblins.”

“Thereafter we experience incessant health problems — inexplicable physical pain, headaches, leg and back pains, tedium, weight loss, lack of sleep and dementia as those in Kambuzuma who are indeed a sorry sight,” said Magwiza.

He claims his father threatens to kill anyone who dare challenge him over the matter.

“First and Second respondents are calculatingly very cruel and deceitful to the point of deriving excitement in the destruction of their family and members of the clan. The name Chigwedere – though synonymous with affluence in its provenance, Hwedza, is in effect fraught with disasters for everyone else except the First and Second respondents.”

Magwiza further alleges that his father because of the power vested in him by the goblins, is capable of “domineering everyone in which ever way his prowess in unnatural and spiritual allows him to.”

He said Cde Chigwedere was an expert on tradition and culture and twists all acceptable cultural norms to suit his “dark designs”.

“This is the reason why third respondent’s (Zinatha) expert involvement is required – to engage the said goblins into agreeing to leave the family at whatever charge they demand in monetary terms.”

Magwiza is seeking an order stopping his father from indulging in uncultural practices designed “to be detrimental to the well-being of his off-spring, immediate family and clan members.”

He also wants an order directing Cde Chigwedere “to send off all the goblins in their possession by paying all the charges the said goblins shall demand as per culture.”

Magwiza wants the court to force Cde Chigwedere and his wife to allow traditionalists and apostolics unhindered access to their homestead.

He wants the director general of Zinatha to appoint three traditionalists and two apostolic prophets with unquestioned expertise “to successfully conduct the send off ceremony referred to in paragraph 3 above in the presents of family and clan members available”.

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SOULS' VISITING TIME IN THE ESTONIAN FOLK CALENDAR

folklore.ee

Mall Hiimäe. Tartu, Estonia

The concept of the souls' visiting time in the Estonian folk calendar is known throughout the country. It signifies the perception by the Estonians that there is a period when the souls of the dead are moving around and visiting their former homes. Specific definitions of this time differ. Judging by different archives, the measure can be a certain day in a certain week, or in several successive weeks, a certain number of weeks or days. The most important feast days of autumn are used to define the beginning and end of the souls' visiting time: September 29 _ Michaelmas (*mihkkipäev*), November 10 _ Martinmas (*mardipäev*), November 25 _ St. Catherine's Day (*kadripäev*), Christmas. And besides, the frequent use of such adverbs as 'before', 'after', 'around', 'towards', etc., seems to arise not from forgetting but from the fact that the idea of the actual duration of this period was vague.

In the course of time, the idea of the souls' visiting time as a longer period seems to have acquired the meaning that it was necessary to do something special _ to arrange a worthy reception for the souls. Food could be left on the table once, twice or more times, at the beginning and/or at the end of this period, with a week's interval (e.g. every Saturday during the souls' visiting time), or just from the evening till midnight or till morning. The distribution of the souls' visiting time varies. Most frequently the souls' visiting time is before Martinmas, usually beginning one week after Michaelmas and ending one week before Martinmas, or the day is identical of the All Souls' Day on November 2. This period is most common in the central part of South Estonia _ in the district of Viljandi and the adjacent regions. The activities connected with Christmas place this period (the Souls' Time) unanimously before Yuletide, and it means obviously not just the days (week) before Christmas Eve, but generally late autumn. In many cases it has been stated that the souls' visiting time was in autumn.

With the help of this rather variegated picture it can be presumed that before the feast days of the church calendar reached Estonia, the end of the year was placed at the souls' visiting time in the local calendar. This, in its turn, was determined by the dying of nature in autumn, the end of vegetation, and at the same time the darkest period of the year and the end of the agricultural season. This time has been the period of receiving the souls of the dead (ancestors) among many European nations, but slowly its customs have centred around the church-established All Saints' Day on November 1, and All Souls' Day, November 2, or around these days. the same tendency is present in the Estonian tradition. In books and visitation protocols we can often come across the Souls' Day as the time when the Estonians brought food for the souls¹. In Finland the traditions clustered around All Saints' Day on November 1 are especially plentiful, whereas the Souls' Day is of minor importance². In Latvia it was customary to offer food to the souls of St. Simon's Day (October 28), the dating of the souls' visiting time varies as in Estonia, and there appears the same tendency to concentrate on the first days of November³. Among the Slavic peoples the day of honouring the ancestors is October 26 (or the Saturday preceding it), the same date is celebrated by the Northeast Estonians, the Votians and the Karelians.

During this period talking and working were forbidden, but certain belief records point out that only one of these two aspects was emphasised. When one ignored the prohibition of talking, it souls result in thunder-damage, but work was not banned completely. The mentioned forbidden activities have included spinning, sewing, carding and other work connected with wool _ otherwise sheep would not prosper (South Estonia). Late at night, working indoors was forbidden _ the souls were believed to arrive in the evening. In other cases only the work-ban at night has been emphasised. Some records indicate that the souls' visiting time was considered critical for cattle. Information about riddling (then the animals would give birth to multicoloured young) issues from the northern coastal areas and South Estonia. Originally this activity can emanate both from the cult of ancestors and from the customs of the turn of the year _ in both cases it is a critical period when riddling has acquired a magical effect among many nations, including the Latvians (from Martinmas till Christmas), Udmurts (from autumn, especially at Christmas time), and others⁴.

Data about feeding the souls and receiving them in the homes are more numerous in South Estonia. Comparing the information concerning Estonians and other nations in the printed sources, it appears that to some extent the places where food was left and the choice of food varies, but some customs are universal. Estonians, Livonians, Latvians, Lithuanians and other nations have the custom that the living speak to the souls, as if directing the guests or the results of their visit _ calling the expected guests by their names, telling them to help themselves with the food, apologies for the lack of better dishes, and at their departure the application to the forefathers to continue taking care of the fields and cattle, a recommendation not to step on corn-sprouts on their way back (it would spoil the future crop). When the crop failed all the same in the following year, its logical cause was that the souls had not been satisfied.

When the beliefs connected with the malevolent dead deepened during the centuries, the attitude of the living towards the visiting souls must have changed. The dissatisfaction of the souls can express itself already during the treatment on the funeral. A quotation from an archive record: *When the souls' visiting time has come to an end and the souls are given a send-off, some freshly boiled meat on a wooden plate is taken to the loft in the evening, for the souls to eat. This time no linen should be beetled and no noise made, and the souls were permitted to leave in silence. If some dead had been buried in shabby clothes, they were said to have cried and whined while leaving, in some cases also howling, 'I have a blue shirt on!'* (1894).

The tradition to heat the sauna for the souls seems to be more common (or has been preserved for a longer period) among the Finns and Karelians than among the Estonians or Latvians. The sauna was heated before feeding the souls, also the water was heated and things needed for washing were made ready. In the records of the Estonian traditions it appears that sauna was more a place to give out food, or it has been stated that food was accompanied by a bath whisk and a piece of soap for washing.

In books about the earlier period, sauna as a place for laying out food is mentioned more often than in the archive records about the last century. In the records the loft is named most frequently. Descriptions stressing that one had to lay out some of every kind of food in the

household (hence also eggs, curds, mashed potatoes, bread, and some others), indicate that these customs originate from the general sacrificing tradition.

The reasons for leaving the food were: *'it was a matter of luck', 'then there will be good luck', 'then the souls won't go across the field'* (i.e. rye will not fail). It was believed that when no food was offered (or when the souls disliked it), *'it will bring death to the house', 'souls will do evil', 'cattle or field will be damaged'*. No one tried to offer the souls symbolic food or something unworthy, only in rare cases items like tripe and the like have been mentioned. There is no information about feeding the souls with food obtained from outside the household (e.g. fish, meat of wild animals, berries).

The melting of the mental image of revenants into the tradition of the souls' visiting time is evident in the mumming tradition in the Viljandi district, which continued up to the first decades of the 20th century. In this region mumming was done not only on the eve of Martinmas and St. Catherine's Day, but throughout several weeks. As the mumming tradition has no fixed pattern, it is reasonable to presume that the tradition is of relatively late origin, although it looks rather ancient. Beggars have traditionally been called 'souls': *'These are no beggars, minstrel-beggars were the guests, they are souls.'* People tried to imitate namely souls, or, to be more precise, ghosts. For this reason they dressed in white, less frequently in black ('evil souls'), or wrapped themselves in a white sheet. The souls threatened the hosts with a rod, tried to switch, squeeze or trouble them in some other way. They howled, squealed, or were completely silent (a souls does not speak), demanded food (because souls are to be fed). In some regions they danced and played an instrument. The souls came to visit during several nights or only once, according to their wish. In several reports the souls' visiting time has been related to the departure of souls. *'When the souls are seen off, then the souls come.'*

A single report explaining the aim of masking is of interest: when the souls' visiting time was over, the souls were turned out, *'a white sheet was wrapped around, a bundle of rods held in the hand'*. In the memory of minstrel-beggars a note is made about singing, e.g.,

On the eve of the day the souls came. I was tending the cattle at Laane, then we went minstrel-begging in the neighbouring household. We were dressed in white, sheets around us. The receivers were to give something. Apples were given. If not, they whipped, they birched one another. These verses were sung: 'The souls have reached us, whoo-pee, The souls have reached us, whoo-pee. At the order of the Belltinger we have but arrived at the house. By twelve we must again be back in the chapel'. (See: RKM II 94, 141/2 (1) < Krk (1960)).

It becomes evident from the words of the song that minstrel-beggars are hurrying back to the graveyard by twelve o'clock, because the chapel-ward is then going to shut the door (the chapel-ward of Paistu graveyard who was mentioned in the song died at the end of the 19th century, as the local people have said). Apparently minstrel-begging became popular as an occasion of merry-making just at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, but earlier it could have followed the original spirit of the event more strictly (white clothing, a ban of talking, characteristic sounds, and the like), and it can be related to the seeing off of

the souls or their departure. In comparison with the Finnish and Karelian *kekritars* or *kõüritars*, who were masked as strangers or terrifying figures, scared children, and with the Latvian *tsigans* who went from house to house, joking and riddling, the souls of the Viljandi district are quite peculiar as such.

In the souls' visiting time the weather was supposed to be foggy and calm. Wind was associated with the discontent faction of the souls (the howling of the wind resembled the noises that the souls made). In the same way, as in spring it was customary to observe the rising of the temperature to the zero on the Annunciation Day on March 25, the beginning of icing was followed on the All Souls' Day. This significant change is reflected in the proverb *The souls come in a carriage and leave on a sledge*. Probably the carriage and the sledge have been mentioned just figuratively, and yet, it could also be an echo from the ancient tradition to go to meet the souls in the graveyard on a vehicle, as is reported about our kindred nations, e.g. the Maris. The choice of either a carriage or a sledge (i.e. if the weather is warm or cold) has helped both the Estonians and Finns to forecast weather.

It associates with the finishing of the agricultural work much less in Estonia than in Finland, where this period's *kekri*-festival⁵ is simultaneously a festive day to celebrate the end of reaping, the turn of the year, and for honouring the souls of the ancestors. The Estonian, Livonian and Latvian traditions are well comparable, as regards the concept and dating of the souls' visiting time. As for South Estonia, is apparently unified already during the period of tight contacts between the Baltic and Balto-Finnic tribes, and, showing unusual conservatism, remained without any significant changes throughout centuries. Through Russian Orthodox church calendar *midrusk*, i.e. St. Dmitri's Day, has also been known in East Estonia (derived from the feast of the Russian Saint Dmitri, celebrated on Saturday before October 26).

St. Dmitri's Day has no definite date, but preparing better food for the dead ancestors and laying the table belong to the customs of that feast. The members of the family were sitting a bit farther away, until the souls were supposed to have eaten enough, and only then everybody started to eat. The information is from the end of the 19th century.

Today we can learn about the souls' visiting time only from elderly informants. Examples can be drawn from the custom to light candles on the graves or on the window-sills to commemorate the deceased, and the organised souls' visiting time celebration at the Time of the Yellowing of the Leaves (on October 15, 1988, about 20,000 people gathered in Tartu St. Mary's Cemetery for the celebration).

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Unexpected wood source for Chaco Canyon great houses pasthorizonspr.com

Posted on December 8, 2015



Before the year 1020, most of the wood for construction in Chaco Canyon came from the Zuni Mountains about 50 miles (75 km) to the south. The species of tree used in the buildings did not grow nearby, so the trees must have been transported from distant mountain ranges.

About 240,000 trees were used to build massive structures, some five stories high and with hundreds of rooms, in New Mexico's arid, rocky Chaco Canyon during

the time period 850 to 1140. The buildings include some of the largest pre-Columbian buildings in North America.



Chetro Kell, built during the 10th and 11th centuries. Image: National Park Service

"The casual observer will see hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of beams sticking out of the walls. There's wood all over the place in these structures," said lead author Christopher Guiterman. "They're built out of stone and wood."

To figure out where the trees for the beams had grown, Guiterman used a method known as dendroprovenance that had not been used in the American Southwest before.

By 1060, the Chacoans had switched to harvesting trees from the Chuska Mountains about 50 miles (75 km) to the west.

The switch in wood sources coincides with several important developments in Chacoan culture, said Guiterman, a doctoral candidate in UA's School of Natural Resources and the Environment.

"There's a change in the masonry style—the architectural signature of the construction. There's a massive increase in the amount of construction—about half of 'downtown Chaco' houses were built at the time the wood started coming from the Chuska Mountains," he said.

By reviewing archaeological records, the team found other materials coming to Chaco from the Chuskas at the same time.

"There's pottery and there's chipped-stone tools—things like projectile points and carving devices," he said.

The new research corroborates previous research from the UA that used the chemistry of Chaco Canyon beams to figure out that Chuska Mountain trees were a wood source.

Guiterman, UA Regents' Professor Emeritus Thomas Swetnam and UA Professor Emeritus Jeffrey Dean will publish their paper, *"Eleventh-Century Shift in Timber Procurement Areas for the Great Houses of Chaco Canyon,"* in an upcoming issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The Western National Parks Association and the National Park Service funded the research.



Chris Baisan of the University of Arizona's Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research samples a dead tree in New Mexico's Chuska Mountains. The tree dates from the time that ancient Puebloans were building massive structures in Chaco Canyon, about 50 miles away. Image: Christopher H. Guiterman

To learn how ancient people interacted with Southwestern forests, Guiterman and Swetnam decided to study the wood used in Chaco Canyon buildings.

Guiterman wondered if the annual growth rings of trees could reveal the origin of beams. Doing such a study would also test the results from the chemical method of determining the wood's source.

He decided to try the dendroprovenance technique, which has been used in Europe to figure out the source of wood in artifacts.

Guiterman had the necessary materials at hand: Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research founder A.E. Douglass and his student Emil

Haury collected wood from ancient Puebloan structures and nearby mountain ranges throughout the Southwest starting in the 1920s and used the material to date the great ruins of the Southwest.

Douglass' and Haury's dated samples are archived in the laboratory's basement, along with wood collected all over the Southwest ever since by legions of archaeologists, including dendroarchaeologist Dean.

The laboratory's archives contain cardboard box after cardboard box after cardboard box—all carefully labeled—of wood samples. Guiterman said there are more than 6,000 wood specimens from Chaco Canyon great houses alone.

"We pulled stuff out of the archive that hasn't been looked at in 30 or 40 years," he said. "It was pretty cool to open those boxes."

The annual growth rings in trees reflect regional climate—rings are wider in good growing years and thinner in bad ones. The patterns of thick-and-thin rings in trees that grow in the

mountain ranges that surround Chaco Canyon are similar because the climate is the same.

However, each mountain range has slightly different conditions. Therefore, growth patterns of trees from one mountain range are not identical to those of trees in nearby ranges.

To pinpoint the origin of a tree that became a building beam, the dendroprovenance method requires finding a strong match between the tree-ring patterns in a beam and the average tree-ring patterns from trees of the same age known to be from a particular mountain range.

It sounds easy, but the work is painstaking. Guiterman had to compare the patterns on 170 individual beams with archived tree-ring patterns from seven different nearby mountain ranges.

The task took him four years.

Swetnam said, *"We think this is a powerful new method to use in the Southwest. We tested the method using modern trees and could determine their source of origin with 90 percent accuracy."*

More than 70 percent of the 170 timbers were from the Zuni or Chuska mountain ranges. Guiterman said the 11th-century switch to the Chuskas coincided with an expansion of the Chacoan culture and indicates the cultural importance of that mountain range.

"We're learning more and more about what these people did so long ago and how they utilized and interacted with their environment," he said.

One possible next step, Guiterman said, is looking for the source of beams in other ancient Puebloan structures in the region.

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South Dakota ghost town up for sale, at reduced price; Swett can be had for just \$250,000

startribune.com

November 30, 2015 — 3:25pm



A road marker highlights Swett, S.D.'s small borders. The ghost town is up for sale for \$250,000.

SWETT, S.D. — The southwestern South Dakota ghost town of Swett is once again for sale, and this time the asking price is a lot cheaper.

Swett is home to about 6 acres of land, an empty house reputed to be haunted and a closed bar. It first went on the market in June 2014, for \$399,000. It generated interest around the world, but the three written offers fell through for various reasons.

Real estate agent Stacie Montgomery told the Rapid City Journal

(<http://bit.ly/1QPfHGa>) that she's put the town southeast of Rapid City back on the market, at a reduced price of \$250,000. The tract was cleaned up, with three decaying mobile homes and an aging transport truck removed.

Swett isn't the only town in the area put up for sale in recent years. In 2011, a Philippines-based church bought most of the town of Scenic, paying \$700,000.

Montgomery said when Swett went on the market last year, she got hundreds of emails and calls from prospects as far away as China, Russia and Australia. She said she got several verbal offers in addition to the written ones.

Those who showed interest in buying the town included people who wanted to be mayor or live off-grid, and production companies considering reality shows, Montgomery said.

One pitch, Montgomery said, was from a Nebraska man who wanted to bring in 2,000 women from Russia and 600 men who are felons, build houses and run cameras nonstop.

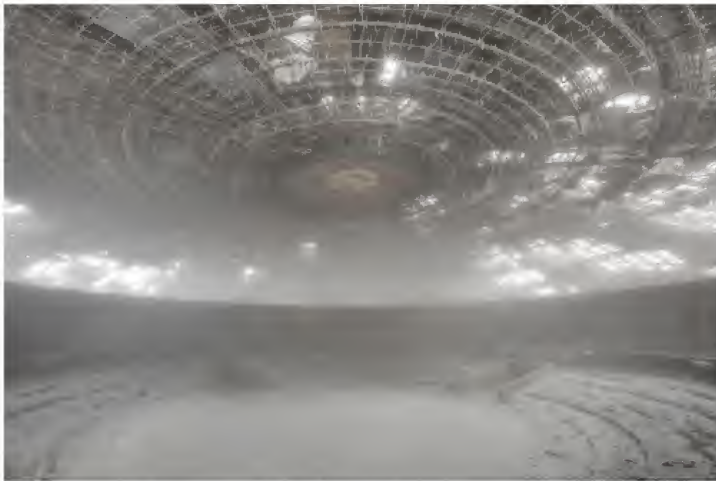
Montgomery still gets phone calls about the town, she said.

"It's been a year and a half and people still want to know about Swett," Montgomery said.

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Soviet Ghosts: Photographs from a Shredded Iron Curtain atlasobscura.com

by Allison Meier / 29 Aug 2014



Buzludzha, Bulgaria (all photographs by Rebecca Litchfield)

Out in the former Soviet Union, the Iron Curtain still hangs in tatters. Photographer Rebecca Litchfield journeyed through freezing winds and sometimes high security to document these abandoned remains. From Ukraine, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Russia, and places in between, she sought out the ruins of bombastic optimism for a utopian future and military paranoia. In a new book called *Soviet Ghosts*, released this month by Carpet Bombing Culture, these photographs are compiled into

one haunting vision of a lost empire. Litchfield answered a few of our questions about the book and shared some of its incredible images below.

It's not easy to get to these Soviet ruins, and you experienced some incredible hazards like radiation exposure, arrest, interrogation. What drew you there?

I love the challenge to get to places. It takes many hours of preparation, lots of driving, and getting up before sunrise, and of course there are the dangers. But it's very exciting to see these places and witness something that not a lot people would see normally. It's amazing to capture these images so I can show them to people who would have never have imagined these places could have existed. You need to be careful all the time, but for me it is worth it.

How did you find these places that are off most people's radar?

It takes a lot of research; Google is my best friend. It's all about searching different areas all around the world for derelict and abandoned places. A lot of detective work is required, and also word of mouth from people that have visited previously.

Is there something about Soviet ruins that you find more captivating than other abandoned places?

I was drawn to the ruins left from the Soviet Union, because it is an era in time that has now passed, and I feel it is important to capture these places before they are completely gone, like capturing a moment in history that soon will pass.

Are you continuing to explore Soviet ruins, or has the experience led you to another subject?

I will continue to capture ruins all over the world for the indefinite future, also I am embarking

on a PhD on the photographing of "Dark Tourist" sites around the world, so will spend a lot of time visiting and capturing these locations over the next three years.



Soviet Steam Train, Hungary

Beelitz, Germany

Soviet Friendship Monument in Bulgaria

Soviet Submarine, UK

Tuberculosis Hospital, Russia



article-image

Technical College, Russia

Sanatorium, Russia

Skruda, Latvia

Kramnitz, Germany

Soviet Ghosts by Rebecca Litchfield is available now from Carpet Bombing Culture.



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Piracy and Papacy: The Legacy of Thibault's treasure - Medievalists.net

medievalists.net

December 7, 2014 By Medievalists.net

By James Hinton



View of the Palais des Papes in Avignon, France. 17th century

Piracy and the Papacy are not two things one ordinarily associate together. Pirates are usually viewed as particularly violent Caribbean sailors swashbuckling their way through the 17th century while popes are generally thought of these days as elderly priests closeted in Rome dealing with an increasingly large rap sheet of public relations disasters. Pirates and popes seem to be two things that simply would not intersect owing to both time and distance, but in 1357 intersect they did. The result was a court claim that resulted claims for damages that wound up providing us one of

the finest medieval cities to survive today.

Our tale of early buccaneering begins with an unlikely source, a bishop in Lisbon, Portugal. Thibaud de Castillon was himself remarkable only for being unremarkable. He had almost literally followed in an uncle's footsteps, essentially climbing the ecclesiastic ladder by taking the positions in the church his uncle vacated. By 1352 this boring church functionary found himself in Lisbon, where he proceeded to practice graft and corruption to a sufficient degree that it complicated relations between kingdom and the Papacy.

To remedy the situation, Thibault engaged in some legal legerdemain with several local merchants and church officials. The trick worked, and when Thibault died in 1356 he had amassed a considerable fortune. The Papal treasurer, Jean de Gurriague, swooped in and, claiming that the various tricks Thibault had performed had been through the agency of the church, took title to the entire treasure. In early 1357 he set sail on the *São Vicente*, bound for Avignon and the Pope.

Unfortunately for the Pope, 1357 was not a good year to be sailing. The French and English had been beating on one another over Aquitaine and the French crown for twenty years. Against this backdrop, King Peter of Castile and King Peter IV of Aragon decided to go to war against one another. Peter of Aragon had decided he preferred the rebellious brother of Peter of Castile's for the Castilian throne. Aragon's Peter enlisted the support of the French to put down his brother and Peter of Aragon, which led to Aragon's Peter to gain the backing of the English. Portugal weighed in as an ally of Castile. This whole silly affair became known as the War of the Two Peters.

Peter of Aragon's ambitions included control over the Mediterranean. As such he built up a large navy to exploit the war as a means to crush rival Genoa as well as Castile. He then proceeded to pretty much give them nothing much to do, and neither Genoa or Castile's navies moved to correct that situation by coming at Aragon. This left a large number of powerful ships being crewed by very bored and violent sailors belonging to three different kingdoms loitering everywhere.

São Vicente ran smack into two of these ships just off Cartagena, one of Castile's ports. Despite the fact that one of the galleys was Castilian and one was Genoan, and thus both allies of Portugal, the bored sailors sensed a chance for both fun and riches. They seized the ship, put the papal treasurer ashore in Cartagena, split the treasure, and absconded.

The Castilian ship, commanded by Martin Yanes, sailed off with their ill-gotten loot and disappeared from history. The Genoan ship, however, was less fortunate. Commanded by Antonio "Butafoc" of Seville, the galley made it as far as Maguio, France not far from the treasure's original destination of Avignon. There the galley found itself inadvertently blown ashore. The ship, treasure, and crew were all captured by the local royal garrison, and from there things went downhill rapidly.

The capturing garrison notified the French crown of their capture, leading to royal assessors inventorying the treasure as salvaging rights. A papal subcollector who had been part of the original survey of Thibault's fortune in Lisbon came down from Avignon and immediately recognized the treasure as belonging to the Pope. He filed claim against the French crown in order to negate any salvage rights. This precipitated an investigation to determine who could claim what from the wreckage.

Though these were the official claims against the treasure, they weren't the only ones. Local fishermen beat the royal garrison to the wreck while the pirates were still attempting to flee. Some portion of the treasure "wandered off" as a result, never to be seen again. Butafoc's crew had all been hanged as soon as they had been caught, but Butafoc himself, along with two officers, had been spared. They had attempted to flee with a large amount of loose coin. After capture, they had turned this over to the Bishop of Torino in a (successful) ploy to buy their lives and freedom.

While the final disposition of the treasure hung in doubt (and slowly eroded thanks to the locals and the pirate officers) the Lisbon merchants Thibault had worked with got involved as well. One, Piere Laugautra was discovered to actually owe money rather than have a claim. While what remained of the treasure wound up going to the Pope, it was this debt that turned out to have the most momentous impact in this entire story.

It turns out that the debt Laugautra owed was the result of his losing a cargo of wool clothes to (ironically) pirates in 1535. He had invested somewhere between 1,000 and 1,400 florins of Thibault's money into this, and the loss had left him unable to pay. In order to recoup his

losses he filed a claim against Valencia. As professor James Kraska of Norwich University has explained in multiple papers and classes, governments allowing their sailors to go pirate are liable for their actions and have been even prior to the Treaty of Westphalia. Laugautra was recompensed with a warehouse full of sea-salt. This he turned around and surrendered to the church to pay off his debt.

The church then turned around and attempted to sell the sea-salt in Avignon, but ran into a problem. Italian mercantile factors owned a total monopoly on the market for sea-salt. The Pope was shut out. One flex of Papal muscle later the Italians were out and the Papacy now owned the monopoly on sea-salt in Avignon. This monopoly would wind up providing the church with a far larger fortune than Thibauld ever accomplished, as it would last for more than 400 years. The medieval and renaissance fortifications that survive to this day were all financed through this monopoly.

Avignon's fortifications and many of the key buildings inside of them are now national monuments or part of UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. These walls and ramparts are amongst the few such examples still existing in France, helping compel four million visitors a year to drop in on the town of 90,000 people. That is the most important and lasting legacy of this entire tale. Thanks to a group of pirates and their encounter with the papacy, Avignon is one of the jewels in the crown of medieval Europe's remaining presence today.

James Hinton is neither a pope nor a pirate. He spends his time in Idaho trying to convince his daughters not to follow in the footsteps of Anne Bonny and Mary Read. You can read further articles by him at his blog, <http://jamiemhinton.wordpress.com/>

*You can read more about this story in **The spoils of the Pope and the pirates, 1357 : the complete legal dossier from the Vatican**, which is published online by the Ames Foundation.*

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Sponge-Throwing Painters of the Ancient World

hoaxes.org

An ancient legend described the role of chance in art — a sponge flung in anger at a canvas accidentally produced the exact effect a painter had been striving for.



Untitled (Diagonal Series), 1969. Source . *Untitled (Diagonal Series), 1969. Source .*

Pliny the Elder (23-79 c.e.) told the story of the Greek painter Protogenes who spent seven years working on a painting of the hero Ialysos with his dog. During this time he only ate beans, so that his artistic faculties wouldn't be blunted by over-indulgence. However, one aspect of the work eluded him. Try as he might, the foam coming from the panting dog's mouth didn't look right.

Chafing with anxiety, for he aimed at absolute truth in his painting and not at a makeshift, he had wiped it out again and again, and changed his brush without finding any satisfaction. At last, enraged with the art which was too evident, he threw his sponge at the hateful spot, and the sponge left on the picture the colors it had wiped off, giving the

exact effect he had intended, and chance thus became the mirror of nature.

It's an interesting story, and nothing about it seems that unlikely. Except that Pliny then mentions that the painter Nealkes did the exact same thing. He also flung a sponge at a painting in anger, and in this way managed to get the foam coming from a horse's mouth to look just right.

We find another variant of the story in the 63rd Discourse ("On Fortune") of the Greek orator Dio Chrysostom. Now the painter is Apelles, who, like Nealkes, was struggling with the foam coming from a horse's mouth:

What happened to Apelles the painter because of Fortune deserves recounting. For, as the story goes, he was painting a horse — not a work-horse but a war-horse. Its neck was high arched, its ears erect, its eyes fierce, like one come not from work but from war, with the spirit of the charge in their glance, and its feet were rising in the air, touching the ground lightly one after the other. Moreover, the driver had a firm grip on the reins, throttling the martial gallop of the horse in mid-career. But though the picture had everything true to life, there was lacking a colour wherewith to depict froth such as there would be when blood and saliva have mixed in constant intermingling, the panting breath driving before it the moisture of the lips and forming froth because of laboured breathing, while the cruel bit spattered blood upon the froth. So, then, Apelles knew not how to represent froth of a horse wearied in action. But as he was more and more perplexed, finally in a fit of desperation he hurled his sponge at the painting, striking it near the bit. But the sponge, containing as it did many colours, which when taken together resembled bloody froth, fitted its colour to the painting. And at the sight Apelles was delighted by what Fortune had accomplished in his moment of despair and finished his painting, not through his art, but through the aid of Fortune.

With a total of three sponge-throwing ancient painters, we're in urban legend territory. (Or, at least, the ancient equivalent of an urban legend.) It just seems unlikely that so many painters got lucky by throwing sponges. But for some reason, it was a story that appealed to ancient writers. The art historian Horst Janson suggests that, "The inference to be drawn from the sponge story, it would seem, is that Fortune

reserves such 'strokes of luck' only for the greatest of artists, as if on occasion she took pity on their ambition to achieve the impossible."

We can find the sponge story repeated by later authors. Michel de Montaigne told the story in his essays, and Thomas Carlyle alluded to it in the final chapter of *Sartor Resartus*.

But I'm curious whether the modern art world has generated its own similar stories about the role of chance in artistic creation — specifically stories about artists flinging things at their canvases in anger, and in this way serendipitously perfecting their work.

After some searching, I came across the Indian artist Tyeb Mehta, who was fond of telling the story that in 1969 he was suffering from a creative block. Finally, in frustration, he flung black paint at a canvas, creating a black, diagonal streak. But as he looked at what he had done, he realized that the black streak seemed to "cleave the canvas and yet unite it at the same time," and he went on to create an entire "diagonal" series, consisting of paintings divided by black streaks.



Untitled (Diagonal Series), 1969. Source .

Of course, Jackson Pollock flung paint at his canvases, but to me that doesn't seem to be the same because Pollock was flinging paint deliberately, rather than in a moment of impulsive anger.

Can anyone think of other modern equivalents of the sponge-flinging story? Let me know!

Art Art Urban Legends

Posted on Tue May 19, 2015

Comments

Someone trying to clean a mess up with a sponge and accidentally discovering they liked the effect sounds way more plausible to me.

Posted by zequi in Buenos aires on Tue May 19, 2015 at 12:06 PM

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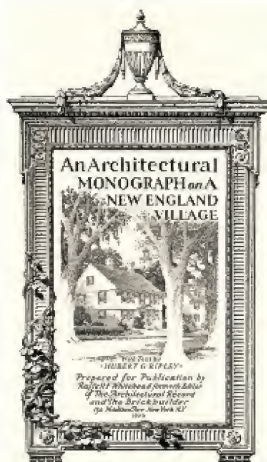
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Stotham, Massachusetts: The Town That Didn't Exist

hoaxes.org

The White Pine Monograph Series was a series of carefully researched, high quality brochures, paid for by Weyerhaeuser mills and edited by Russell Whitehead, that collected together photographs, drawings, and descriptions of early American buildings built with white pine. It was published bimonthly between 1915 and 1940, and sent to architects, with the goal of encouraging them to use white pine as a building material. The series was considered to be so expertly produced, that many architects preserved bound copies of the monographs in their offices. The series can still be found in many architectural libraries today.

Given its intended audience, the White Pine series was not the kind of publication that contained a lot of humor. However, it did include one unusual item. The April 1920 issue (vol. VI, No. 2) contained an article, written by Hubert G. Ripley, about the town of Stotham, Massachusetts. It contained many photographs of houses and buildings in the town.



Frontispiece of Hubert Ripley's article

The article began by offering a short history of the town:

When Zabdiel Podbury fled from Stoke-on-Tritham in the Spring of 1689 with Drusilla Ives, taking passage on the bark Promise, sailing for Massachusetts Bay, it was not realized at the time that, from this union, and the joint labors of the Penthesilean pair, the village of Stotham (so named by them in memory of their autochthonous abode) would in later days come to be regarded as a typical example, although, perhaps, not so well known, of the unspoiled New England

Village.

The building identified as the 'Meeting House of the Stotham Congregation Society (above) was, in reality, the North Congregational Church Parish House of Woodbury, Connecticut



(below -- click to view on Google maps).



Ripley proceeded to paint a picture of Stotham as a village seemingly untouched by modernity, where ancient traditions were kept alive. He offered brief histories of some of the homes, such as the Rogers mansion, known locally as the "Haunted House." He also praised the townsfolk themselves:

It is the personal contact with the people themselves that lends an elusive charm to the externals of their environment. As the houses seem to show by their aspect, they are the personification, in their external and internal attributes, of the simplicity of life, and the friendly point of view, of the gentle folk who live in them.

Stotham, Ripley concluded, was a village "where the quintessence of naturalness finds its ultimate expression."

Questions Arise

For over two decades no one questioned Ripley's article about the idyllic town of Stotham. It was only when Leicester B. Holland, head of the Fine Arts Department of the Library of Congress, asked his staff to catalog all the material in the White Pine Series, that anyone realized something was amiss.

Holland's staff reported back to him that they had successfully cataloged everything in the series, but that they had encountered a problem when they came to the article about Stotham. Try as they might, they couldn't find any evidence of the town's existence, despite having pored over maps and histories of Massachusetts. Nor could they find references to any of the characters, such as Zabdiel Podbury, mentioned by Ripley in his article.

Massachusetts

In reality, a house in Bedford,



THE PODBURY-IVES HOUSE. Ruben Durrell, Architect.
Forms a chaste silhouette on the heights overlooking the river.

Later Holland ran into Russell Whitehead, the former editor of the *White Pine Series*, and took the opportunity to ask his help in identifying the details of Stotham. John Harbeson, in an article that appeared in the May 1964 issue of *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, described what happened next.

There was a short silence during which Whitehead maintained a completely expressionless face, and then a sly smile passed across it. Finally he told this story.

As the early numbers had been assembled, about Quincy, the Boston Post Road, the Wooden Architecture of the Lower Delaware Valley, etc., the most appropriate photographs of whole buildings or of details were chosen for publication. Always a few were left over, as not being quite as good, or simply because there was not sufficient room. These were put in a big drawer. After a while the drawer was quite full. He and Hubert Ripley were looking through it one day; they were of the opinion many of the photographs were too good to be wasted, and they felt the public to which the *White Pine Series* was addressed was being deprived of some charming documents that would surely serve a purpose to the avid users of the data, many of them architects proud of their 'Early American' work. And so the plan was formed to create a village in which 'Zabdiel Podbury who married Drusilla Ives, a Penthesilean pair named the village they founded Stotham, in memory of their autochthonous abode.'

In other words, although Stotham would have been a charming place to visit, it unfortunately didn't exist.

Links and References

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Photo Categories: False Captions, Advertising, Architecture, 1920-1939

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Since the earliest days of exploration, paintings and books have offered Britons their first glimpse of exotic creatures from faraway lands. Now, a collection of some of the most unusual images used to bring newly discovered animals into the public eye are to go on display at the Grant Museum of Zoology at University College London.



A rhino, from Tabulae scleti et Muscularum Corporis Humani, Bernhard Siegfried Albinus, 1747. © Wellcome Library, London

'Strange Creatures: The art of unknown animals' pulls together a range of artworks by people who had never seen exotic animals in the flesh. Highlights include a 16th-century copy of Dürer's famous armoured rhinoceros; medieval accounts of exotic creatures; fake 'dragon' specimens created from dried fish by sailors, and 21st-century reconstructions of dinosaurs. Together they explore how unknown animals have, through history, been communicated to the wider public.

The exhibition centres upon George Stubbs' famous painting of a kangaroo, which was created following Captain Cook's first Pacific 'Voyage of Discovery', and is Europe's first

painting of an Australian animal.

UCL's Dr Chiara Ambrosio, one of the 10 researchers who contributed to the exhibition, said: "Sometimes they were created from explorers' written descriptions, while other artists copied existing drawings but added their own interpretations of those descriptions. It is fascinating to see a change in entire worldviews reflected in the way particular images changed over time."

Exhibition curator, Jack Ashby, said: "It's not only historic artworks which misportrayed these amazing species, but we also see it in the practice of taxidermy, where skins were shipped back to Europe and fleshed-out to recreate the animal based on a few notes. It's also true of modern dinosaur toys, which have been copying outdated images of fossil species for over a century.

"It's been such a fascinating exhibition to pull together – being able to work with a group of historians, artists and scientists from such a diverse set of disciplines has allowed us to tell so many stories about the topic of animal representations. It's also very exciting to see these incredible objects, like Stubbs' kangaroo, and Captain Cook's handwritten voyage accounts, displayed alongside the Grant Museum's animal specimens."

A drawing of a lion by an unknown artist who had clearly never seen one. A Lion in a Landscape, Anonymous (Dutch), late 17th century. © UCL Art Museum, University College London.

The earliest European painting of an Australian animal. It was produced by George Stubbs, who had never seen a kangaroo, based on an inflated skin, skull, written descriptions and sketches. The Kongouro from New Holland (Kangaroo), George Stubbs, 1772. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.



A drawing of a lion by an unknown artist who had clearly never seen one. A Lion in a Landscape, Anonymous (Dutch), late 17th century. © UCL Art Museum, University College London

A 13th-century manuscript engraving of an elephant drawn in 1241 before the artist, Matthew Paris, had seen one. From *Chronica Maiora*, Matthew Paris (MS 16II, f. 152v). © The Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

A knitted thylacine pelt. Tasmanian tigers were hunted to extinction in 1936 because of a powerful farming lobby. Artists like Ruth Marshall use the familiar, unchallenging practice of knitting to raise controversial issues like habitat loss and extinction. The movement is called craftivism. Tasmanian Tiger #3, Ruth Marshall, 2015. © Ruth Marshall.



The earliest European painting of an Australian animal. It was produced by George Stubbs, who had never seen a kangaroo, based on an inflated skin, skull, written descriptions and sketches. The Kongouro from New Holland (Kangaroo), George Stubbs, 1772. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

A copy of Dürer's rhino, which was based on a written description. It has fantastical armour and a strange shoulder horn, and became an enduring image of rhinos for Europeans. A Rhinoceros, Enea Vico (after Albrecht Dürer), 1558. © UCL Art Museum, University College London.

An elephant from the same 13th-century manuscript as above (picture 4), drawn in 1255 after Matthew Paris had seen one in the Tower of London. From *Chronica Maiora*, Matthew Paris, 13th century (MS 16I, f. iir) Credit © the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.



A 13th-century manuscript engraving of an elephant drawn in 1241 before the artist, Matthew Paris, had seen one. From *Chronica Maiora*, Matthew Paris (MS 16II, f. 152v). © The Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.



A knitted thylacine pelt. Tasmanian tigers were hunted to extinction in 1936 because of a powerful farming lobby. Artists like Ruth Marshall use the

'Strange Creatures: The art of unknown animals' will run at the Grant Museum of Zoology from 16 March to 27 June 2015. To find out more, click [here](#).

History Extra and History

familiar, unchallenging practice of knitting to raise controversial issues like habitat loss and extinction. The movement is called craftivism. Tasmanian Tiger #3, Ruth Marshall, 2015. © Ruth Marshall

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A copy of Dürer's rhino, which was based on a written description. It has fantastical armour and a strange shoulder horn, and became an enduring image of rhinos for Europeans. A Rhinoceros, Enea Vico (after Albrecht Dürer), 1558. © UCL Art Museum, University College London



An elephant from the same 13th-century manuscript as above (picture 4), drawn in 1255 after Matthew Paris had seen one in the Tower of London. From Chronica Maiora, Matthew Paris, 13th century (MS 161, f.11r) Credit © the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

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Suffolk lost piglet found in care of horses - BBC News

bbc.com

• 8 December 2015



Martine Lettau said she found the piglet "rustling and squealing" in her mustangs' stables on Monday morning

A horse breeder who found a newborn piglet in her stables thinks it may have been carried there by a fox.

The piglet was nestled among straw used by mustangs, but the stables owner has no idea where it came from.

Martine Lettau, from Tuddenham St Mary in Suffolk, said: "Mustangs are quite renowned for seeing off predators."

The piglet was taken to a nearby pig farm, but its manager said it

was "unlikely" it had come from there originally.

Image caption

Ms Lettau said she found the piglet "rustling and squeaking" in the stable on Monday morning.

"The only thing I can imagine is that a fox carried the piglet off when it was born, carried it over a mile here and happened to come through the paddock," she said.

"The foals might have then chased the fox off and the piglet got herded into the stable.

"When I found the piglet and it started squealing, some of the mustangs came over from the paddock to see what I was doing to it, so they must have taken ownership."

Ms Lettau said she took the piglet to a neighbouring farm in the Mildenhall area.

The farm manager, who did not wish to be identified, said that as it was only a day old he could not confirm if it had been born in one of his fields, but the piglet had put it with a sow and it was weaning.

He said: "I think it would be highly unlikely for a fox to carry a piglet for a mile, let alone for it to have no mark or injury as a result.

"If the piglet's temperature dropped by even a couple of degrees it would not have survived."

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Image copyright Martine Lettau

Suleiman the Magnificent's tomb believed to have been found in Hungary

Associated Press in Budapest

Wednesday 9 December 2015 Last modified on Wednesday 9 December 2015

theguardian.com

Historian says 'in all certainty' remains found near Szigetvar in southern Hungary point to resting place of 16th-century sultan of Ottoman Empire



Portrait of Suleiman I (the Magnificent), tenth sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Photograph: Leemage/Corbis Norbert Pap.

Remains of the tomb of the Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, who died in 1566 while his troops were besieging the fortress of Szigetvar in southern Hungary, are believed to have been found, a Hungarian historian has said.

Norbert Pap, of the University of Pecs, said the tomb is understood to have been built over the spot where Suleiman's tent stood and where he died. Pap said objects suggesting it was Suleiman's tomb were found during the dig, as well as other historical evidence, although more excavations were needed to confirm the find.



Norbert Pap.

"We have data which all points in the same direction," Pap said at a presentation of the latest findings on Wednesday. "That is why we say 'in all certainty', because there is no sign pointing in another direction. But more confirmation is needed, as this is a very delicate topic."

Until his death at age 71, Suleiman was the Ottoman empire's longest-ruling sultan. Under him the Turks greatly expanded their dominance in the Balkans, the Middle East and northern Africa during his 46-year reign.

What is believed to be the sultan's tomb is located in the former Ottoman settlement of Turbek, which was destroyed in the 1680s. The settlement's discovery was announced by Pap in 2013.

Historians believe Suleiman's heart and internal organs were buried in the tomb and his body taken back to Constantinople, as Istanbul was then known. His death at Szigetvar was kept secret for 48 days to prevent his troops from giving up the fight.

Szigetvar was defended by locals led by Croatian-Hungarian nobleman Miklos Zrinyi. The siege was a pyrrhic victory for the Turks and delayed their ultimately unsuccessful advance toward Vienna for decades.

Pap said some other structures near the tomb, all still underground, are likely to be a small mosque and a dervish monastery. He said excavation work at the site would restart in April.

- maxgiaco

Szigetvar was defended by Nikola Šubić Zrinski who was the grandfather of Miklos.

- Rodbio
10m ago

Suleiman was the leader of the original ISIS.

- Pinback71
22m ago

Considering the genocide, rape and enslavement of hundreds of thousands if not millions of Europeans committed at his command, should he not be called Suleiman the Evil Murdering Bastard?

- Pinback71 Pinback71
18m ago

or...Suleiman the Baby Killing Rapist...

- tashtan Pinback71
10m ago

So he was the role model for the Evil Murdering Bastards that ruled over the European colonies in Africa, Asia and the Americas!

- tashtan tashtan
4m ago

Oh... I forgot Australasia! The British killed every single Aborigine in Tasmania, during its colonisation in the 19th century. I am afraid that no nation has a monopoly on evil deeds. Homo Sapiens is the most violent species to have evolved on this planet!

- Anarch
1h ago

Let's see how Erdogone the wannabeneoottomansultan spins all this... Add Orban after Putin to the ever-growing list of enemies?

- Juvavum
1h ago

It should be said he does not go primarily by "the magnificent" (muhteşem) in Turkish, but by "Kanunî" Sultan Süleyman, which means "lawful".

It also has to be said that, given that "lawful" in Islam probably can just as well mean expanding the territory, you can never be quite sure.

- Naeem Rashid Juvavum
38m ago

'Kanuni' is usually translated as 'lawgiver' rather than 'lawful'. (I've no idea what the second sentence is supposed to mean.)

- Juvavum Naeem Rashid
7m ago

In the Turkish Wikipedia, the following is said:

Batıda Muhteşem Süleyman,[2][3] Doğuda ise adaletli yönetimine atfen Kanunî Sultan Süleyman ...

Roughly, "called the magnificent in the West, in the East, however, because of his taking

care of the application of the law, "Kanuni".

Compare also: <http://www.nedirnedemek.com/kanuni-nedir-kanuni-ne-demek>

where "kanuni" is translated with "canonic, lawful, rightful".

"Lawgiver" is something that a Khalif by definition cannot be. Because the law is there. Sharia is there. It cannot be given (invented) in the western sense. It has to be applied, which is what the Sultan does. And that's what the Turkish Wikipedia entry seems to imply, but I may be mistaken.

As for my last cryptic sentence. I do indeed not know if applying the Sharia correctly implies conquering countries for Islam. But I strongly suppose it does, from what I know about the attitudes and behaviour of past and present Islamic polities.

- Lucas Teatime

1h ago

Given his record for appropriation of historical property for use by his "illiberal democracy" I suspect even now Victor Orban is formulating a plan whereby the tomb is excavated, refurbished and rid of Suleiman entirely so that he can use it as his family's mausoleum.

- Aytac99

2h ago

Actually his name is not Magnificent that is what The Turk's called him. The Europeans called him "Suleiman the Law giver". Bec at the time in Europe people were living very uncivilised they often took the rules from The Suleiman.

- Aytac99 Aytac99

2h ago

Excuse my spelling "Suleiman the Lawgiver"

- Carlo Starace Aytac99

5m ago

Absolutely not, it's exactly the opposite of what you said. The Ottomans called him "Kanuni" the Westeners "Magnificent". Therefore your theory doesn't hold up

- Victor Pulis

2h ago

The death of the sultan was also delayed to give time for his son Selim who was in Constantinople to consolidate his hold on the throne. In fact Suleyman's doctor was stangled in the tent to prevent him from announcing the news.

- Jiri

2h ago

How long before Erdogan decides he needs to invade Hungary?

- Rudolph Andrew Furtado

5h ago

Had recently visited Istanbul and the Cappadocia region of Turkey. Was amazed by the splendour and wealth of the Ottoman Empire of which Suleiman the Magnificent who build the walls of

Jerusalem is considered its greatest ruler. Now if only "I.S.I.S", "Al Qaeda" and the other radical Islamic groups followed Turkish Islamic society then the World would be a safer place.

• Sachaflashman Rudolph Andrew Furtado
5h ago

Maybe safer...but only for men.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/almost-200000-child-brides-in-turkey-female-lawyer-claims-a6765181.html>

• iNoseU Rudolph Andrew Furtado
28m ago

You do omit that the Ottoman took these territories by force post 1300 committing monstrous acts on the way.

• Servet HosafSachaflashman
24m ago

That's one of problems we have with Kurdish people. Trying to educate people but ignorant people stubborn to not let girls to study.

• r7781lt
8h ago

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs.

• r7781lt
8h ago

Erdogan will be planning on a move into Hungary, in his Greater Turkey dream. With him as the sultan, of course.

• iNoseU r7781lt
26m ago

I'm sure Oban would accept his (Erdogan's) heart and internal organs gladly, probably donating them to his friend Putin.

• vr13vr
8h ago

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs.

• vr13vr
8h ago

He had a lot of energy if at the age of 71 he was still camping in the field, directing the siege.

• r7781lt vr13vr
8h ago

He was everything that the ISIS top dog dreams to be.

• Victor Pulis vr13vr
2h ago

Exactly a year earlier the ottoman army had been defeated in the great siege of Malta. The sultan is said to have remarked that it seemed that the sword of Islam was only invincible in his hand.

- Servet Hosaf r7781lt
23m ago

Ottoman empire was only empire. Not jihadist or something else.

- illbthr22
9h ago

Deport the invader.

- Nikrd29
9h ago

What is the big deal to where he died since his body was taken back to Constantinople and buried there. I thought that the term "tomb" states where a body was/is buried!

- ID7560997 Nikrd29
3h ago

This was in pre-refrigator days. A travel from Hungary to Turkey entailed weeks (or months). His internal organs were laid to rest in Hungary in a dedicated building around which a proper town was erected. While his body was taken to Turkey. Unfortunately, the burial building (of his internal organs) and the surrounding town was destroyed later as the Turkish left Hungary and the Austrians took over. hence the discovery.

- iNoseU Nikrd29
25m ago

The heart is usually significant.

- Shatford Shatford
9h ago

Find that hat in the photo, and you find the man.

Would be awesome if those hats came back in style.

- DThompson5 Shatford Shatford
5h ago

My thoughts exactly! The beards are already coming back. But that hat is so fine. Think of all the babes that would attract. I'll bet Suleiman had a pimp cane as well.

- Jiri Shatford Shatford
2h ago

You are welcome to re start the trend.

It could go "viral" as they say.

- Diogenes44
9h ago

If true - what a remarkable discovery. Suleiman was a world figure and a remarkable leader for his people.

- Alboooza Afi

10h ago

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs.

- freepedestrian

11h ago

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs.

- Alboooza Afi

12h ago

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our community standards. Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see our FAQs.

- SouthernStar1010

12h ago

Croatian-Hungarian nobleman Nikola Zrinski (Miklos Zrinyi) was a brave man and is a great hero in both countries.

- Alistair Binks

12h ago

I think Hungarians will, after thorough excavations, open the site for tourists and Muslim pilgrims. The mausoleum, the so called turbe might also be rebuilt. There are other muslim pilgrimage sites in Hungary, e.g. the Gul Baba Turbe in Budapest. Worth visiting!

- Craig Workman Alistair Binks

4h ago

How much have you had?

- bovinescatology

13h ago

Was he really, really magnificent, or did he just have a really, really good press secretary?

- Hansen_Yoghurt bovinescatology

12h ago

It's sad we don't give these cool nicknames to country leaders anymore. Roosevelt the Magnificent or Bush the mad or Kohn the Unifier. It just SOUNDS GOOD to sort of sum up the public opinion in a nickname. The French even have a Louis the Fat, I guess he wasn't much good as a king.

- SystemD Hansen_Yoghurt

11h ago

I always liked the name of Suleiman's successor, Selim the Sot.

- David Michael Ward Hansen_Yoghurt

10h ago

Just matter of being dead for long enough. History will have a catchy name for Angela Merkel.

• cerealcat

13h ago

His body was taken back to Istanbul, not Constantinople, eh?

• Rahere2015 cerealcat

13h ago

Use the name of the time. Constantinople ended over 100 years earlier, to use it would be an anachronism.

• freepedestrian Rahere2015

11h ago

Because the Muslims attacked the Eastern capital of the Christian Empire...whoops I guess I wasn't supposed to say that!

• Rahere2015 freepedestrian

10h ago

I should advise you at this point that you're dealing with an expert in Eugenius IV (the Venetian Gabriele Condulmer), Cusanus and his circle.

The simple fact is that the Venetians had lined up a policy with the Greeks and tried putting it into effect in the early 1430s, when Condulmer was slotted into the Papacy. Cusanus started putting a policy (designed by his mentor d'Ailly as justification for persuading Sigisbert to convene the Council of Constance) into effect, starting to promote the Papacy over the secular Kings. I'm dealing with how they dealt with the Jews, and via their financial control over the Kings, over them too by extension. This was backed by a similar deal with the Orthodox Church, which was effectively for the Church to raise a Crusade to defend Constantinople, and if you really want to fly a kite, Gavin Menzies even suggests negotiations were going on with the Chinese! The entire Orthodox Church, from Armenia to Ethiopia, actually surrendered to Rome at Florence, but when the deal was referred to the people of Constantinople, they refused to ratify it and were pretty much left to their fate. So although, yes, the Ottomans were on the make, Constantinople functionally committed suicide, refusing a deal on offer from Europe, out of simple pride.

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Coastguard officials investigate a wooden boat at Fukui port in Sakai city, western Japan, on November 24, 2015 after the ship was found drifting

Coastguard officials investigate a wooden boat at Fukui port in Sakai city, western Japan, on November 24, 2015 after the ship was found drifting (AFP Photo/)

Tokyo (AFP) - Japan is investigating nearly a dozen suspicious boats recently found drifting off the country's coastline, some with decaying bodies aboard, officials said Friday, as media speculated they came from North Korea.

At least 11 cases involving wooden boats -- some badly

damaged -- with 20 bodies on board have been reported during October and November, a coastguard spokesman told AFP.

Many of the boats have been towed to Japanese ports, but the bodies are yet to be identified, he said, adding that investigations were ongoing.

On Tuesday, one of the boats was pulled ashore at Fukui port after three sets of remains were found inside when coastguard personnel spotted it some 100 kilometres (62 miles) offshore in the Sea of Japan, private TV channel Tokyo Broadcasting System reported.

The body of water is known as the East Sea in North and South Korea.

TBS said the remains were badly decomposed and partially skeletonised, while Japan's public TV broadcaster NHK said Korean writing was visible on the boats as well as clothes left inside the vessels.

Experts suspect the vessels are fishing boats from North Korea as the impoverished state prone to poor harvests is trying to expand its fishing industry to bolster food security, NHK said.

But a number of North Korean fishing boats have been lost due to a lack of modern equipment, including the Global Positioning System capability, it added.

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Syed Farook's Family Has Hired a Crazy, Conspiracy-theory Addled Lawyer (Updated) | RedState

Posted by Leon H. Wolf on December 4, 2015 at 4:24 pm

redstate.com

Syed Farook's Family Has Hired a Crazy, Conspiracy-theory Addled Lawyer (Updated)



I haven't really wanted to comment on this because I try not to judge how a family handles its grief at the loss of a family member. However, the family has hired two lawyers, at least one of

whom appears to be a stark raving conspiracy nut. These two yahoos have been on virtually every media outlet in the entire world today, and it's time to at least acknowledge that they are not helping. Of course, I'm not entirely sure what the family's goal is at this point.

It is beyond caveat, according to the testimony of basically infinity witnesses, that both Farook and his wife exchanged fire with police when police attempted to stop them in the now-infamous black SUV. Moreover, the trail of evidence that led them to Farook came from a tip from a worker at the County office, and when police looked into Farook they found that he had rented the black SUV that witnesses had clearly indicated the shooters had left the scene in. Even if you discount all the evidence found by police (as conspiracy theorists are wont to do), then you are left with overwhelming testimony by innocent bystanders that these two were responsible for the shootings in San Bernardino.

Now, they're both dead at this point and thus not going to ever face trial. Only a crazy person would attempt to sue the city for their wrongful deaths, given what has occurred. So I am not sure what the end game is here for these attorneys, but right now they are making themselves and the Farook family seem like kooks.

Here they are, for instance, suggesting that Sandy Hook never even happened:

There's a lot of crazy to unpack in this one clip, but one of the attorneys, David Chesley, seems to suggest that because Farook's wife, Tafsheen Malik, was small, she couldn't have held a gun. Or something. He seems to think that by invoking "Bonnie and Clyde" everyone will see how insane this is and that it's all a joke to suggest that his client was involved. The main problem he has is that *someone* performed those shootings, and by all accounts it was his client.

There's also the statement, **"There were a lot of questions drawn with Sandy Hook and whether or not that was a real incident or not."** I confess to being at a loss as to what this is even supposed to mean. Is he suggesting that the Sandy Hook massacre never happened? Because that's sure what it sounds like, which is a step waaaaaaayyy into wacko territory.

Here is Chesley earlier today with CNN's Chris Cuomo, expanding on these remarks saying that a 90-pound woman is also apparently incapable of wearing a vest.

He also questions why they were "apparently" found face down and handcuffed in the truck (news helicopters got footage of one of the suspects after they had been shot and had fallen out of the car, so this is not how they were "found." Maybe eventually someone picked up the dead body and put it in the car, but there's actual video evidence that they weren't shot while face down and cuffed in the car, which is what this loon seems to be suggesting).

He also raises the "compelling" point that "no one has ever seen Syed with some of the things they found at the scene." When Cuomo pressed with "Like what?" He answered, "The pipe bombs, for example. **No one had ever seen him have or use anything like that.**"

You know who else no one had ever seen have or use a pipe bomb? The Unabomber. I mean, right up until he was caught being the Unabomber, that is. People who intend to use pipe bombs and assault weapons don't generally go out parading them around in public before their intended use. I mean, even the very stupidest of criminals understands that.

Again, I don't know what the family's goal in hiring this guy was. If they are planning to sue the city or county for wrongful death, I can safely say that this is the worst idea anyone has ever had. I have no idea if the FBI is looking into the family as possible accomplices, but if so, Chesley's representation of them doesn't require him to spew nonsense on television. If they want someone to make the case that Farook might have been innocent, they could do better than to hire a guy who thinks that Sandy Hook might have literally not happened.

UPDATE 1 - 12/4/15, 8:03PM ET: As if to underline this point, these two yahoos went out this afternoon while I was at the dentist and held a press conference. I am just now sitting down and attempting to watch this debacle and I don't even know where to start:

This entire press conference is worse than that scene from *Swingers* where Jon Favreau tries to leave a message for the girl he met at the bar, in terms of its unique ability to make you cringe, stare in stupefied disbelief, and laugh all at the same time. Watching the first seven minutes of this presser alone completely broke my brain. I kept wanting to stop and write a post about every single sentence that fell out of their mouths once the questions actually started.

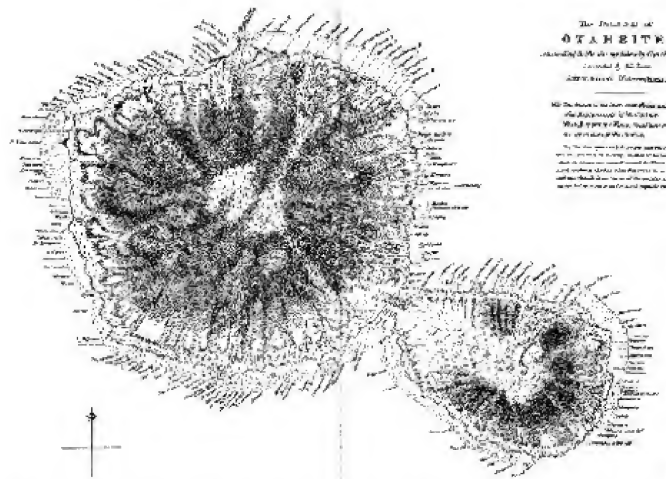
The only thing I can tell you is to watch the whole thing.

If you dare.

I am told, by the way, that CAIR is paying for these yahoos, and that they held a presser yesterday and announced that they would be hiring these guys. Sorry I missed it; in my defense I don't listen to what CAIR says ever.

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In 1890 Henry Adams – the historian, academic, journalist, and descendent of two US presidents – set out on a tour of the South Pacific. After befriendng the family of “the last Queen of Tahiti,” he became inspired to write what is considered to be the first history of the island. Through Adams’ letters, Ray Davis explores the story of the book’s creation.



The book variously titled in its two small self-published editions **Tahiti, Memoirs of Marau Taaroa**, or **Memoirs of Arii Taimai** was a collaboration between the American historian Henry Adams and two Queens of Tahiti: Arii Taimai (positioned as the first-person narrator of the work) and her daughter, Marau Taaroa.

After his wife’s suicide in December 1885, Adams lost himself in the massive job of finishing his history of the Jefferson and Madison administrations. After it was done,

he came close to losing himself in nothing at all. In 1890, he set out with a friend, the fashionable painter John La Farge, for an indefinite voyage into the Pacific. His purported list of goals included tracking down and sampling the legendary durian fruit, following his friend Clarence King’s example and falling madly in lust with exotic native girls, and attaining Enlightenment.

Predictably, all these pseudo-hopes were frustrated: the durian was a “shameful disgrace to humanity” (although the mango and mangosteen comforted), and intellectual bemusement ran stronger than either bodily or spiritual lust. But the unspoken purpose — to somehow re-learn survival — was gained: Adams started the trip in an almost catatonic depression and ended it sparkling with bitches and moans in high pissant form.

During the travellers’ five months in Tahiti, Adams grew bored with passive tourism:

Lovely as it is, it gets on my nerves at last — this eternal charm of middle-aged melancholy. If I could only paint it, or express it in poetry or prose, or do anything with it, or even shake it out of its exasperating repose, the feeling would be a pleasant one, and I should fall in love with the very wrinkles of my venerable and spiritual Taïtian grandmother; but when one has nothing else to look at, one rebels at being forever smiled upon by a grandmother whose complexion is absolutely divine, and whose attitude indicates the highest breeding, while she suggests no end of charm of conversation, yet refuses to do anything but smile in a sort of sad way that may mean much or mean nothing. Either she or I come near to being a fool.

After searching the coral reef for confirmation or refutation of Darwin, he became close friends with the family of "the last Queen of Tahiti," Marau Taaroa:

... she is greatly interested in Taïti history, poetry, legends and traditions, and as for ghost-stories, she tells them by the hour with evident belief.... She always seems to me to be quite capable of doing anything strange, out of abstraction; as she might mistake me for her small child, and sling me on her arm without noticing the difference, such as it is, in size.

... and especially attached to Arii Tamai, described in an early letter as "the hereditary chiefess of the Tevas, the grandest dame in Tahiti, the widow of Salmon, the London Jew." (The psychologically speculative might wonder whether Adams was attracted by the contrast between her warm-heartedness and the frankly cold aggression of his own family of faded nation-rulers.) On May 10, 1891, he wrote:

By way of excitement or something to talk about, I some time ago told old Marau that she ought to write memoirs, and if she would narrate her life to me, I would take notes and write it out, chapter by chapter. To our surprise, she took up the idea seriously, and we are to begin work today, assisted by the old chiefess mother, who will have to start us from Captain Cook's time.



The Salmon Family: Marau second on left, Arii Taimai at far right

And a week later:

Luckily I am rather amused and occupied. My "Memoirs of Marau, Queen of Tahiti" give me a sort of excuse for doing nothing. Whenever Marau comes to town, I get from her a lot of notes, which I understand very little, and she not much; then I write them out; then find they are all wrong; then dispute with her till she becomes energetic and goes as far as the next room to ask her mother. The

dear old lady has been quite unwell. The other evening I was taken in to see her, and found her sitting on her mat on an inner verandah. When I sat down beside her, she drew me to her and kissed me so affectionately that the tears stood in my eyes.... La Farge is not in love with her as I am; he takes more to Marau and the girls; but I think the Hinarii is worth them all.

At the beginning of June:

Marau is to go on with her memoirs, and send them to Washington. So she says, with her ferocious air of determination, half Tahitian and half Hebrew; and if she keeps her word, I shall have a little occupation which will amuse you too, for I have begged her to put in all the scandal she can, and the devil knows that she

can put in plenty.

And on leaving Tahiti a few days later:

... we had a gay breakfast; but I cared much less for the gaiety than I did for the parting with the dear old lady, who kissed me on both cheeks — after all, she is barely seventy, va! — and made us a little speech, with such dignity and feeling, that though it was in native, and I did not understand a word of it, I quite broke down. I shall never see her again, but I have learned from her what the archaic woman was. If Marau only completes the memoirs, you will see; and I left Marau dead bent on doing it.

The work did continue after Adams's return to America — part of a letter from December 1892 survives in which Adams presses Marau at scholarly length on dozens of points of genealogy and geography — finally achieving what would be its final form in a privately printed edition of 1901. It's a decidedly odd form, certainly not the personal memoirs originally described: Marau shows up not at all, and the supposed narrator has turned into Arii Tamai. The mix of scholarly history, ethnographic reportage, and primary source material hasn't been worked into a organic voice or structure.

Given this, the book perhaps wouldn't make the best introduction to Henry Adams. But as the first history of Tahiti, written with the full support of the family at the center of the island's annexation as a French colony, and as an attempt to give full attention to both sides of the confrontation between "civilized" and "primitive" cultures, it deserves wider access than it's attained to date.



Paintings of Tahiti by John La Farge (left) and Henry Adams (right)

Ray Davis is an occasional essayist who publishes his own work at Pseudopodium and the work of others at The Bellona Times Repress.

Links to works

- *Tahiti, Memoirs of Marau Taaroa* (1901)
 - [html](#)
- *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918)
 - [txt](#)
 - [html](#)
 - [pdf online](#)

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It turns out tardigrades, AKA 'water bears' are actually body snatchers

Jen Mills for Metro.co.uk Sunday 29 Nov 2015 1:15 pm



Tardigrades, AKA 'water bears' are actually body snatchers

cute little faces which look oddly like vacuum cleaners and wishing they could take one home to live on their skin.

Now scientists have found out a little bit more about the weird creature and how it manages to be so tough and resilient, coming out fighting even when boiled, crushed or put in a deep freezer.

The first ever complete analysis of its genome shows that it is able to steal loads of DNA from other living things, including bacteria and plants, allowing it to adapt to its environment.

Sexy beasts (Picture: eyeofscience/science source images)

Recognise this little beastie?

It's a tardigrade, darling of the internet (a B lister only when compared to otters and cats).

People just love the microscopic eight-legged animals which can even survive in space, admiring their



F6184R medically accurate illustration of a water bear

Lavalamp tardigrade (Picture: Alamy)



The Griffalo tardigrade (Picture: BBC)

It has the largest amount of 'foreign' DNA of any

Television Programme: *Miniature Britain*.
Microscopic image of a tardigrade /
waterbear. Programme Name: *Miniature*

Britain - TX: 12/12/2012 - Episode: n/a (No.
n/a) - Embargoed for publication until: n/a -
Picture Shows: Microscopic image of a
tardigrade / waterbear. - (C) BBC -
Photographer: POWER AND
SYRED/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

creature yet discovered and analysed so far on earth.

Researchers from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill published a study concluding that 17.5 per cent of a tardigrade's DNA has been pinched from outside sources – meaning we might need to rethink traditional views about how DNA is inherited from parents.

They think this might happen by somehow 'swapping' genetic material with other things, like bacteria, under conditions of extreme stress when the DNA breaks down.



tardigrade

'Water bears' are less than 1mm in length and are translucent so difficult to see with the naked eye.

They like to live where it's damp, in places like moss or soil, while other species are found in water.

And for those who REALLY love tardigrades... you can even get a super-sized one as a bottle opener now.

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• 30 November 2015



This Facebook message - one of the milder ones highlighted by the campaign - says "If you washed properly, you wouldn't be so dirty." The slogan below reads: "Virtual racism, real consequences"

Brazilians who post racist abuse online may see their words blown up and pasted onto billboards near their houses.

The campaign is called "Virtual racism, real consequences" and it's backed by Criola, a civil rights organisation run by Afro-Brazilian women. The group collects comments from Facebook or Twitter and uses geolocation tools to find out where the people who have posted them live. They then buy billboard space nearby and post the comments in huge letters, although names and photos are pixelated.

Criola's founder Jurema Werneck says the campaign is intended to encourage people to speak out and report racism. "Those people [who post abuse online] think they can sit in the comfort of their homes and do whatever they want on the internet. We don't let that happen. They can't hide from us, we will find them," Werneck tells BBC Trending. There are laws against racial abuse in Brazil, but Werneck thinks the authorities haven't done enough to enforce them, and that many people are afraid to speak out against racist abuse.

Brazilians who identify as black (sometimes called "Afro-Brazilian") make up 7.6% of the population according to the country's 2010 census. Mixed-race or "pardo" Brazilians, who may have a degree of black ancestry, make up a further 43%.

The campaign was sparked by an incident where a popular black weather presenter became the target of crude racist remarks. The insults were hurled at Maria Julia Coutinho after her photo was posted on the Facebook page of Nacional Journal, a prime-time news programme.

Ironically, the photo was posted on 3 July, which in Brazil is a national day against racial discrimination - and the racially charged comments were quickly overwhelmed by thousands of messages expressing support for Coutinho. "I just printed of all the comments on this post and I will report them to the appropriate authorities. Racism is a crime," said one Facebook user.

The billboard campaign has been running since the summer, and Werneck says she has received mostly positive reactions, including many from Brazilians who aren't black. The campaign has also generated some debate on the social networks it's highlighting. "I thought this was fair and just, shining a light in the face of racists," commented one Facebook user. Another said: "Be careful how you comment you might be the next one to have your words on a billboard." Others, however, were less impressed. "Everyone gets abuse on the internet, not just black people," said one commenter on a newspaper website. "If you don't want to be offended, don't go on the internet."

Teen sought for assaulting police officer with snowball

Charly Haley, chaley@dmreg.com

desmoinesregister.com

Updated 11:05 p.m. CST

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Des Moines Police are seeking a 17-year-old girl for possibly assaulting a police officer after she reportedly threw snowballs at a uniformed officer and other passersby Monday.

The officer reported the incident Wednesday, noting in a police report that the girl threw a chunk of ice about the size of a baseball at him while he was directing traffic for a construction site at about 3:50 p.m. Monday in the 1400 block of Ingersoll Avenue.

According to the police report, the officer saw two teenagers running around throwing snowballs at each other in a nearby parking lot while he was directing traffic. The officer was busy working, so he lost track of the teenagers until he heard something hit near his feet.

The officer turned around and saw the boy and girl standing near the bus stop grinning, and there was a chunk of ice about the size of a baseball near his feet, according to the report. The officer had taken a step forward at the time the ice was thrown, but if he had not, it likely would have hit him in the middle of his back or the back of his head, he wrote in the report.

The officer started to approach the teens to talk with them, but they got on the bus, according to the report.

A witness approached the officer and said he or she saw the girl throw the snowball at the officer and saw the teens throw snowballs at a bus and at an elderly couple's car window, according to the report.

On Tuesday, the officer was directing traffic at the same site and saw the teens again. He approached the girl and got her name, which is not listed in the police report, from her student ID.

He did not have time to arrest her Tuesday, but he requested an arrest warrant Wednesday, according to the report, which lists a possible criminal charge of assault on a police officer.

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Teenagers' skulls taken from grave in travelling families feud, say police

Press Association – Mon, Nov 23, 2015

news.yahoo.com



[View Photo](#)

■ A police forensics tent at Metal Bridge Cemetery in County Durham where a police ...

The skulls of two 16-year-olds have been removed from a family grave in an escalating feud between travelling families, police said.

A graveyard in Metal Bridge, County Durham, has been cordoned off since Saturday afternoon when it was first discovered that a grave had been disturbed.

Durham Constabulary officers said the incident, which included damage to a headstone, took place on Friday night.

The grave belonged to Levi George Price and Gareth Price, who were both 16 when they died in 2001 and 2005 respectively.

Their skulls have not yet been found, police confirmed.

Detective Superintendent Adrian Green said: "We believe that the damage to the graves is part of an ongoing feud between members of travelling families."

In the past fortnight, two homes in the Darlington area have been attacked with vehicles. In the first a stolen horse box was smashed into a bungalow and six days later a recovery truck was driven into a house.

Mr Green said the attack at the small graveyard, little bigger than half a football pitch, was part of the wider feud.

Police have previously said the two incidents with the vehicles could have been linked to an earlier petrol bomb attack.

He added: "You will be aware there have been a number of incidents across the region, specifically in Darlington as well, and we believe they are linked."

The senior detective said the brothers were both 16 when they died.

"You will appreciate this has been very distressing for the family and continues to be so, given the circumstances.

"I think anyone would agree, from whatever community you might come from, that this is a depraved act and the community doesn't have to stand for this."

He said any information about the grave attack or the wider feud would be treated "with the utmost confidentiality".

He added: "This has taken things too far. It is depraved and goes against the religious and cultural beliefs of decent people."

Police have pleaded with those involved in the row to settle their differences and for any witnesses to come forward.

Regular police patrols will take place in key areas "to deal robustly with any further disturbances", Mr Green said.

A large white protective tent remained at the cemetery.

One local, who asked not to be named, said: "This is shocking. Who could do that?"

Another man said: "On Saturday night I had a walk up the street and you could see them working in the darkness, they had floodlights on and they were taking photographs."

Gareth Price was found hanging at Lancaster Farms Young Offenders Institution in 2005, the day before he was due to be sentenced for rape.

An inquest found he had been let down by a series of people in authority.

In a statement released afterwards, his family said: "What hurts the most is that we now know that experts had seen Gareth while he was in prison and predicted that he was at a high risk of killing himself at the time of the sentence.

"We were never told this and neither were the prison officers who were looking after him at that time."

According to reports, Levi Price was found hanging in a shed in 2001. The coroner found he could not be sure the teenager intended to kill himself.

Relatives of people buried in the small graveyard have been visiting the scene since the cordon was put up.

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More on the venues and organisations we've mentioned:

By Richard Moss

culture24.org.uk

A family in Kent has donated a haunted book to Brighton's most haunted house, Preston Manor, after being plagued by spectral visions and ghostly visitations.

The 1915 shop ledger, which was found bricked up in a jeweller's wall in Brighton's East Street during a demolition in the 1980s, was donated by Josephine Benyovits, who lives in Maidstone but grew up in Hove.

It was discovered by her father, Tony Benyovits, in 1988 when he was demolishing the Shorland Fooks shop which closed in 1984. But when they took it home the sinister book caused both father and daughter to suffer what they believe to be a number of "spirit visitations".

Josephine reports that images appeared in her rug, including a group of men, women and children and a soldier with a horse. She says that one of the spirits told her that the ledger must be returned to Brighton for the centenary of its first entry - in December 1915 - prompting a call to the city's spookiest site, Preston Manor.

"At first we weren't sure whether we'd take this apparently ordinary, 100-year-old shop ledger", says Venue Officer Paula Wrightson. "But the family impressed on us quite how scared they were of having the book in their keeping. When I had a phone conversation with Josephine she seemed petrified."

The book contains seemingly ordinary entries listing the jewellery sold from the shop which used to occupy a row of shopfronts in central Brighton.

Preston Manor has its own fair share of ghosts with a reputation for spectral activity and unexplained phenomena dating back to its days as a private home. Over the past decade it has hosted regular paranormal-themed tours, talks and events, continuing a trend started in the 1880s when séances were conducted in the house.

When Wrightson eventually agreed to take the book, which has a battered leather cover with a large chunk missing from it, she asked the family deliver it to Preston Manor, which they did "immediately from Kent".

"It sat on my desk for a couple of weeks," she adds. "During that time I had a meeting with a spiritual medium who was taking part in an event here, and she said she felt the book had 'bad things' emanating from it.

"For me personally, the most interesting aspect of the book is that the entries show what was sold in the shop exactly 100 years ago. But it remains to be seen whether there's more to it than that."

The ledger entries for Tuesday December 7 1915

Miss Baines 4 Madeira Villas brown antique cabinet frame 8/6 (8 shillings and six pence)

Miss H Butler writing indecipherable 2/9

Miss Fanshawe silkette blotter and ? case 2/6

The ledger entries for Wednesday December 8 1915

The Rev G Stewart Newbury the Rectory Fittleworth 50 thin ladies VC and 50 gents VC 3/6 and 3/6

J H Wainwright Esq. 6 Grand Avenue 1 ? leaf money-case 3/6 and one velvet money-case 3/6

Mrs Baines 41 Medina Villas torch and ? box and torch and post and ins for box 6 18/6 and 5/6

You might also like

Spock-like spectre haunts Norfolk railway steam engine

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The \$12 Million Message In A Bottle

hoaxes.org

In 1949, did a California restaurant worker really find a will sealed inside a bottle that bequeathed millions of dollars to him, as the finder of the bottle?



Death notice of Daisy Alexander - London Times, Sep 21, 1939 Frederick Liston, London clairvoyant, prepares to search for Daisy Alexander's will The Stanford Daily - July 29, 1949

The story goes that on March 16, 1949, Jack J. Wurm was walking along a beach near San Francisco when he noticed a liquor bottle washed up on the sand. Jack was a man of modest means. He worked in the kitchen of a restaurant and lived in a small, rented house with his wife. However, his luck was about to change.

Jack noticed there was something inside the bottle. So he opened it up and removed a piece of brown wrapping paper on which the following message was written:

To avoid all confusion I leave my entire estate to the lucky person who finds this

bottle and to my attorney, Barry Cohen, share and share alike.
Daisy Alexander - June 20, 1937

Jack hadn't heard of Daisy Alexander, so he thought the message was probably "a prank of some college kid." Nevertheless, he saved the bottle and message, and three months later told some friends at a party about his discovery.

One of his friends, a GI who had just returned from serving in England, immediately recognized the name. Daisy Alexander, he informed Jack, was the daughter of the sewing-machine magnate Isaac Singer. From what he had heard, she had died in 1940 at the age of 80, injured by the blast of a German bomb that hit her London home. But more importantly for Jack, she had died childless, worth about \$12 million, and without a will. Her lawyer believed she had written a will shortly before her death, but despite a highly publicized search for the document, he had been unable to find it. So the courts were unsure of how to dispose of her estate.

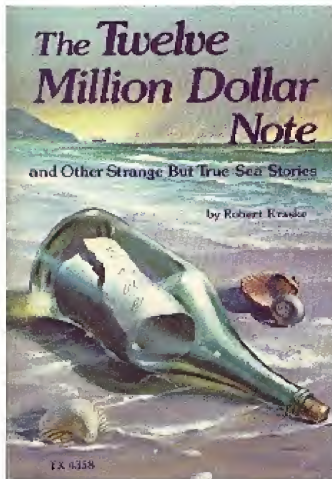
Jack's friend urged him to get in touch with Alexander's lawyer, Barry Cohen, and Jack promptly did this. He was unsure of the lawyer's address, so he sent a letter to the London postmaster asking him to forward his correspondence to Cohen, which the postmaster did. Soon Jack and the lawyer were in touch.

Jack sent a copy of the message-in-a-bottle will to the lawyer, who concluded that it appeared to be genuine. So Jack stood to inherit \$6 million, his half of Alexander's fortune. He would get the money just as soon as a British court made everything official. Though this, of course, could take some time.

And that's how the story goes.

Good story, but is it true?

The tale of Jack Wurm's fortuitous discovery is a popular one. It's been told numerous times in



newspapers, magazines, and on radio shows. It's the titular story in a book — *The twelve million dollar note: Strange but true tales of messages found in seagoing bottles*

, by Robert Kraske (Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1977). And it's also often been used frequently in sermons (such as here and here). The lesson that the sermonizers derive from it is that if Jack Wurm had thrown away the seemingly ridiculous message, he would never have inherited anything. Likewise, they argue, people should not toss aside the Christian message of the Bible, no matter how ridiculous they think it sounds, lest they miss the great reward it offers.

However, the story has been questioned by skeptics. For instance, the Kirkus Review of Kraske's book took the author to task for uncritically accepting the veracity of the tale, and questioned whether there even was such a person as Daisy Alexander:

Kraske appears to have collected clippings—many, of the column-filler sort—without necessarily checking them out. The titular story, for instance, tells of a San Francisco dishwasher whose lucky bottle bore a will naming the finder heir to the signatory's estate. And she, one "Daisy Alexander," was—his friend tells him—"the only child of Isaac Singer, the American sewing-machine millionaire." Now it happens that Singer had a notorious score of children and none of them was named Daisy. No wonder "at last report" in 1955 the twelve-million-dollar claim was still pending—where Kraske is content to leave it.

More recently, a thread on the Snopes message boards questioned the story and concluded that it was an "urban legend." Similarly, the Singer Memories website (about the history of the Singer Sewing Machine Company) has dismissed the story as a "persistent urban legend":

A persistent urban legend claims that Singer's granddaughter Daisy died intestate in England. Several years after her death a beach bum in San Francisco found a bottle with a note in it from Daisy, giving whoever found the bottle half her estate. Her lawyer, who would never otherwise have known of his good fortune, inherited the other half.

So is that it? Is the story nothing more than an urban legend? Well, not so fast. Yes, the story does sound urban-legendy, but investigation reveals that the skeptics may have been a bit too hasty. There are some questionable aspects to the story (someone was almost certainly perpetrating a hoax), but it's not an urban legend. The overall details of the story are true.

The Will of Daisy Alexander

Let's start with Daisy Alexander. Despite the doubts of the Kirkus reviewer, she definitely was a real person. She was indeed a daughter of Isaac Singer (not a granddaughter, as the Singer Memories site thought), and she was very wealthy.

Daisy appears to have been her nickname, which may have been what confused the Kirkus reviewer, even though it was the name she always went by. She married Capt. Granville Alexander, and the activities of the couple were often mentioned in society gossip columns. The Victoria and Albert Museum now owns, as part of its fashion collection, a dress worn by Daisy Alexander as a young woman.



Daisy Alexander's dress

Capt. Alexander died in 1931. After this, Daisy retreated into her Grosvenor square mansion and became increasingly eccentric. Many sources report that she died in 1940, at the age of 80, when a German bomb exploded in the house next door during the Battle of Britain. However, a death notice in the *London Times* reported that she died peacefully in her home on Sep. 20, 1939. *The Times*, one has to assume, is correct. It's not clear what caused the later confusion about the circumstances of her death.

Daisy left behind an estate worth around £3 million (\$12 million), which generated an annual income of \$160,000. Barry Cohen had been her lawyer since 1908, and he knew he had drawn up "four or five wills" for her in the years before her death. However, when he went to look for

them, he couldn't find any of them. They had disappeared.

Nor did he have copies.

Whenever he had drawn up a

DEATHS

ALEXANDER.—On Sept. 20, 1939, peacefully, at 13, Grosvenor Square, W.1. **DAISY**, widow of **GRANVILLE ALEXANDER**. Funeral private.

Death notice of Daisy Alexander - London Times, Sep 21, 1939 Frederick Liston, London clairvoyant, prepares to search for Daisy Alexander's will The Stanford Daily - July 29, 1949

will she had always instructed him to leave blanks for her to fill in later, because she didn't want anyone to know what they were getting before she died.

The only will he did have for her was an old one from 1909, but this will was problematic because it had a page ripped out of it, and it disposed of only a fraction of her estate.

So Cohen began a frantic search for the missing will (or wills). He was sure she must have hidden a will somewhere. But where?

During the war, the Ministry of Works took over Alexander's Grosvenor Square mansion. This complicated the search for the will, because the ministry didn't want a lawyer tearing up the place as people were trying to work. However, the ministry did allow Cohen to use a mine detector to scan the mahogany paneling of the house, in an attempt to find any hidden safes. This turned up nothing.

Cohen suspected that Daisy's former housekeeper, Mrs. Alice Sage, might know where the will was hidden, but he couldn't track her down.

Then the search for the will began to take a turn toward the absurd.

Daisy used to have a parrot named Bob whom she talked to for hours. Cohen thought that if he could find this bird, it might somehow lead him to the will. So a search for the bird ensued, but he never located it.

A spiritualist wrote to Cohen, informing him Daisy's ghost had told her that the will was hidden either in a tall black vase or a Louis XIV gilt settee. Cohen recalled that Daisy actually had owned such items, so he searched through antique shops to find them. He located the vase, but it was empty. He never found the settee.

A West African witch doctor offered Cohen his services as a will-finder. Cohen declined. Likewise, a member of a cult offered to use a secret pendulum device (a "Dawson's Pendulum") to locate the will.

Again, Cohen turned the man down.

Finally, in desperation, Cohen hired Frederick Liston, a clairvoyant. Liston dipped his hands in water, in order to "magnify the electrical vibrations," and then ran his hands over various parts of the Alexander mansion, searching for the will. Unfortunately, he too turned up nothing.



Frederick Liston, London clairvoyant, prepares to search for Daisy Alexander's will *The Stanford Daily* - July 29, 1949

In the meantime, word had spread about the search for the missing will and the increasingly strange methods being used to find it. In 1948 and early 1949, numerous papers ran stories about it. As a result of this publicity, new claimants for Alexander's money began popping up out of the woodwork. Long-lost relatives throughout upstate New York, where Isaac Singer had once lived, announced themselves to be the rightful heirs, plotting out convoluted genealogical patterns to back up their claims. Cohen generally ignored these would-be heirs.

And it was around this time that the hunt for the will took an unexpected twist, when Jack Wurm announced he had found Alexander's will in a bottle washed up on a San Francisco beach.

Jack Wurm's Discovery

In July 1949, newspapers worldwide reported Jack Wurm's discovery of the bottle-borne will of Daisy Alexander. Wire services distributed a photo of him holding the document.



The Stanford Daily - July 29, 1949

Wurm notified Barry Cohen of his discovery. By this time Cohen was 84, and his son Ronald had taken over the day-to-day operations of the law practice that bore their name. But the elder Cohen still took an active interest in anything related to Alexander's will, and when he heard of the will in a bottle, he was intrigued. Surprisingly enough, he didn't dismiss it out of hand. In fact, he told reporters he thought there was a "good chance" it was authentic. He elaborated:

"It sounds fantastic, but she did have a curious interest in floating communications around in a bottle. I recall Mrs. Alexander talked in a fascinated manner about the distances bottles will float. But memory may be tricky and yesterday I asked Mrs. Alexander's old friend, Lady Stanley. She too recalled Mrs. Alexander was interested in floating bottles."

However, Cohen then immediately tempered his enthusiasm with legal reality. He noted that even if Daisy Alexander had written that will, placed it in a bottle, and thrown it into the Thames, and if the bottle had then found its way to San Francisco (presumably taking a northern polar route followed by a southern descent through the Bering Strait), that didn't mean that Wurm and himself were Alexander's legal heirs.

Cohen observed that the text of the will sounded "like somebody's attempt to write a will" rather than a genuine will. And more importantly, the signature on the document hadn't been witnessed. This meant that a British court would never accept it as a valid will.

Still, Cohen was curious enough about the will to want to examine it more closely. He obtained a photostat copy of the document from Wurm, in order to compare the signature to known samples of

Daisy Alexander's handwriting. He also had the document microscopically examined, looking for any "code markings" that Alexander might have left on the document — markings that only her friends would understand.

Presumably he found nothing to convince him that the will was genuine, because in August 1949 Ronald Cohen announced that he and his father were no longer interested in the will that Wurm had found. He suggested that it "might even be a hoax."

Was the will a hoax?

It's possible that Daisy Alexander wrote the message the Jack Wurm found on a California beach in 1949. It's possible, but extremely unlikely. As Ronald Cohen indicated, the will was probably a hoax.

The circumstances of its discovery suggest this. First of all, if Alexander had tossed a bottle into the Thames, it seems farfetched to believe that the bottle would have floated all the way to San Francisco eleven years later (conveniently washing ashore near a major population center). Not impossible, but very improbable.

Second, the timing of the discovery is suspicious — the fact that Wurm found the bottle soon after the search for Alexander's will had been featured prominently in the news. This suggests that someone created the document after being inspired by the recent news stories.

So who created it? Who was the hoaxer?

We can pretty much rule out the Cohens. If they had wanted to create a fake will, they had the means to create something a lot more convincing (and something that courts wouldn't dismiss out of hand).

Wurm, as the man who claimed to have found the will, is the obvious candidate, although it has to be said that he doesn't seem like an obvious hoaxer. He came across in interviews as somewhat guileless and never did much to press his claim to Alexander's money. But then again, there is no standard pattern of what a hoaxer should look like. They come in all kinds of varieties.

Perhaps, as Wurm said he first suspected, the will was the "prank of some college kid" — or some other anonymous hoaxer. Perhaps someone in the San Francisco area read about the search for Alexander's will, put a fake will in a bottle and tossed it in the bay, where it was found soon after by Wurm.

Or perhaps Wurm was in collusion with someone else, someone who came up with the idea, created the will, and then convinced Wurm to pose as its finder, knowing that Wurm would come across as a believable character.

This final scenario seems the most likely to me, since Wurm just doesn't come across as the kind of guy who would have dreamed up such a fanciful scheme. And who could the colluder be? Wurm's GI friend who had served in Britain (the one who knew all about Daisy Alexander) has to be a prime suspect.

However, this is all speculation. Barring the discovery of new information, we'll never know for sure who the hoaxer was.

Postscript

After a flurry of news coverage in 1949, Wurm's discovery was mostly forgotten — until 1954, when reporter Alan Hynd decided to track down Wurm and find out the status of his million-dollar inheritance.

Wurm was still working in the kitchen of a San Francisco restaurant, and he didn't seem to have heard that the Cohens had long ago written off the will-in-a-bottle as a hoax. In fact, Wurm made it sound to Hynd as if the will was in some kind of legal limbo, with the possibility that a court might still declare it valid and make him an instant millionaire. Wurm said:

"I got a lawyer in San Francisco who's handling the whole thing for me and he keeps telling me not to worry. There's a lot of hurdles to go over when a guy like me just picks up a bottle on a beach in a foreign country and stakes a claim for millions just on the strength of a piece of paper in that bottle. I don't know what's been happening. To tell you the truth, I'm afraid to let myself think much about the matter."

Unfortunately for Wurm, by 1954 the fate of Alexander's estate had already been settled. A British court had granted probate for the 1909 will. Alexander's niece and nephew who lived in England became the primary heirs.

Eventually Wurm left San Francisco and retired in Minnesota. He died there in 1987, without ever having seen a dime of Alexander's money.

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Law/Police/Crime

Posted on *Wed Sep 16, 2015*

Comments

Brilliant story, thanks for doing the research

Posted by V T in Cardiff, UK on Fri Sep 25, 2015 at 05:49 AM

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The 19th-Century Tomb That Inspired London's Iconic Telephone Box

hyperallergic.com

- by Allison Meier on November 30, 2015



London telephone box and Eliza Soane's tomb (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic unless otherwise noted)

When you step into one of London's iconic red telephone boxes, you're entering the architecture of a tomb. The 1920s design by Giles Gilbert Scott is said to have been inspired by a 19th-century memorial monument to the wife of famed architect Sir John Soane. On November 23, to mark 200 years since the death of Eliza Soane, staff from the Sir John Soane's Museum placed a wreath at her domed grave.

Maev Kennedy reported for the *Guardian*:

Her tomb, which became the family vault, was raised over her grave in Old St Pancras churchyard in 1816, and inspired the Giles Gilbert Scott telephone kiosk. Scott knew the tomb well as a trustee of the Sir John Soane's Museum for 35 years, and his 1920s creation is now an endlessly imitated landmark in British design.

Gillian Darley affirmed in *John Soane: An Accidental Romantic* that Scott "became a trustee of Sir John Soane's Museum in 1925, the year in which his design was selected, suggesting that the link was more than mere coincidence."



Painting by George Basevi of Eliza Soane's tomb, romanticizing the tomb in a rural setting (photo by Hugh Kelly, courtesy Sir John Soane's Museum)

Currently, some images of the tomb and other artifacts of death from the Soanes's lives are on view at *Death and Memory: Soane and the Architecture of Legacy* at Sir John Soane's Museum, housed in his elaborate former home that he designed. Soane was stricken by Eliza's death on November 22, 1815, never coming out of his deep grief. He kept a model of the tomb he designed for her near his dining table, and long preserved their shared bedroom as a sort of shrine.

He also never forgave his son George,



Eliza Soane's tomb in London's Old St Pancras churchyard

whom he blamed for Eliza's death. George wasn't such a fan of father Soane's neoclassical architecture, which formed London buildings like the Bank of England and Dulwich Picture Gallery, and he wrote two scathing, anonymous articles against his work. When George was identified as the author and Eliza read his words, she reportedly said, "he has given me my death blow — I shall never hold up my head again."

John Soane agreed, and kept the two articles framed on his wall with the macabre label: "Death blows given by George Soane 10th & 24th Sept. 1815." In 1837, when John Soane himself died, he was buried alongside the bones of Eliza, and almost a century later the curious dome of their shared tomb still haunts the city through the enduring K2 telephone box.

John Soane agreed, and kept the two



Eliza Soane's tomb in London's Old St Pancras churchyard

Death and Memory: Soane and the Architecture of Legacy *continues* at Sir John Soane's Museum (13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London) through March 26, 2016.

cemeterydeathGiles Gilbert ScottLondonSir John SoaneSir John Soane's Museum
Hyperallergic welcomes comments and a lively discussion, but comments are moderated after being posted. For more details please read our comment policy.

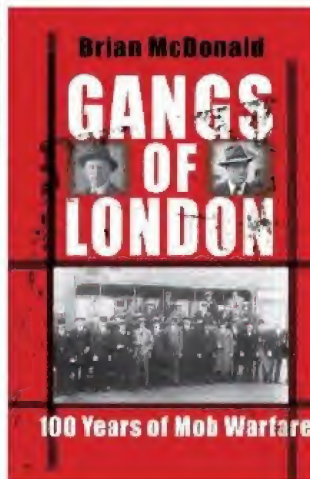
The All-Female Clockwork Oranges Gang

hoaxes.org

Since 2013, an image has circulated online which shows a group of women dressed in old-fashioned men's clothing. These women are identified as "female toughs," members of "one of the most feared of all London's street gangs in the 1880s... the Clockwork Oranges." Those who share the image also sometimes claim that this gang later inspired Anthony Burgess' most notorious novel, *A Clockwork Orange*.



The image has been particularly popular with Twitter accounts such as OldPicsArchive, HistoryPics, and VeryOldPics — all of whom have greatly helped its viral spread. The image debunker PicPedant notes that OldPicsArchive alone has posted the image a total of 33 times. And as PicPedant also notes, the caption attached to the image is completely incorrect.



There actually were all-female gangs in 19th-century London. For instance, there was the all-female Forty Elephants gang which, according to the Guardian, was "responsible for the largest shoplifting operation ever seen in Britain between the 1870s and 1950s." This gang and others like it are discussed by Brian McDonald in his book *Gangs of London*.

However, there was no Clockwork Oranges gang, male or female. Anthony Burgess himself seems to have invented the phrase "a clockwork orange." Burgess once claimed he had heard the term used

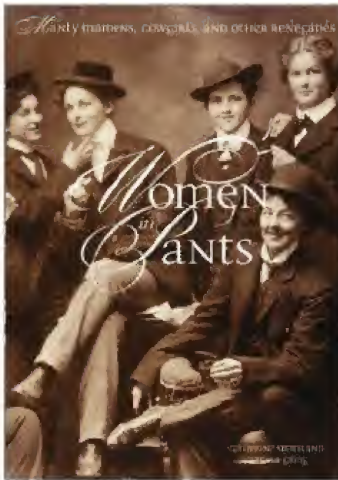
as Cockney slang, but there's no evidence to back that up.

Nor is there any evidence that suggests that the women in the photo were "female toughs" — or members of any street gang whatsoever.

The claim that these women were part of a Clockwork Oranges gang traces back to April 4, 2013, when "The Victorian Academy of Magick" — which is a Facebook community devoted to "steampunk and alternate history fun" (and created by magician Paul Voodini) — gave the image that caption. In other words, the description was alternate-history fantasy. But the idea that these women were part of a gang of "female toughs" proved so appealing that the image with this caption quickly went viral.

But what's the real story behind the image? A small caption printed on the photo reads, "Group of women having a smoke, gelatin silver print, c. 1896."

This caption comes from the 2003 book *Women in Pants: Manly Maidens, Cowgirls, and*



Other Renegades

by Catherine Smith and Cynthia Greig. The image (or part of it, at least) actually appears on the cover of their book, which documents the long history of women wearing pants.

In early 2010, the Chloe and Olivia blog posted a scan of the image, which they got from Smith and Greig's book. Three years later, the Victorian Academy of Magick recaptioned the image — and the rest is history!

I don't have a copy of Smith and Greig's book, so I don't know if they provide any more info about the image. But the next time I'm at the library I'll track their book down to find out. After all, it is an interesting image, even if it doesn't show members of a 19th-century female gang.

Posted on *Wed May 06, 2015*

Comments

Glad to see that you understand the story was meant as a bit of fun! How virulently the story spread across the internet, and how many people simply accepted my obviously fake (and tongue-in-cheek) story, surprised me greatly. The Victorian Academy of Magick produces stories of this nature on an almost daily basis, but none have caught the public imagination quite like the Clockwork Oranges did. As an aside, the concept of female gangs in Victorian London inspired me to write a novel which can be seen here:

<http://www.VictorianVampires.co.uk>

Posted by Paul Voodini in United Kingdom on Tue May 19, 2015 at 02:41 AM

"Queerer than a Clockwork Orange" - my old nan from Hackney Wick used to say it often, particularly in the 80's lol

Posted by Cheryl in Brighton on Tue May 26, 2015 at 11:12 PM

Commenting is no longer available in this channel entry.

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The Berlin U-Bahn is OK with you being weird

10/12

thelocal.de



The Berlin U-Bahn is OK with you being weird

The Berlin U-Bahn is OK with you being weird

The Local · 11 Dec 2015, 16:50

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GMT+01:00 Updated: 11 Dec 2015 16:50 GMT+01:00

Ever wondered whether you can ride your horse on the tube? Grate cheese? Do the splits? We know we have. But happily, the Berlin Transport Authority (BVG) has made a video to answer all these burning questions - and more.

The latest advert by BVG has whipped up a storm across Europe - and it's not hard to guess why.

In "Ist mir egal" ("I don't care"), rapper Kazim Akboga - in uniform as a BVG official - gives passengers the low-down on proper etiquette when travelling with BVG.

"The whole meaning of the video is to have fun," BVG spokesperson Josefin Langer told The Local.

"We want to tell everyone that it's not important how you look, where you come from, or what skin colour you have - we're just here to take you from one place to another."

It's a message that's particularly important as thousands of refugees arrive in Berlin, she added.

The track appeared on YouTube on Friday 11th December, and BVG's link to the video received almost 9,000 shares within the first five hours of appearing on Facebook.

"It's gone through Europe!" said Langer. "We've had calls from Finland, France, Austria..."

It turns out there are quite a few things Akboga "doesn't care" about.

Whether all of these correspond with BVG's official rules is another thing - but it's pretty entertaining, either way.

So what exactly are you allowed to do on a BVG train, according to Akboga? Well...

1. Yawn at the conductor on a Monday morning

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

Ok, this isn't weird. Actually, it's pretty unavoidable.

Bonus points to anyone who can resist the urge to yawn when looking at this picture. We didn't manage it.

2. Wear a crop top



Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

Oh come on. It may be surprisingly mild for December in Berlin... but it's not *that* warm.

3. Play loud music

The guys in the video are sombrero-clad and playing guitars - but we reckon you'd get away with most genres. Even techno, probably.

4. Bring a dog in a shark costume

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

Because why not.

5. Carry your sofa on the train

What's a Berliner to do when they move house? Pay for a removal company?!

Of course not. If the sofa fits on the tube, it's travelling by tube.

6. Ride a horse

Because if there's one thing more exciting than cantering through grassy meadows, it's getting the U2 to Pankow.

7. Sit on another guy's lap

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

It does save seats, we guess.

8. Give a free striptease

Little known fact: the poles most passengers use to stay standing are also the perfect platform for a cheeky pole-dance. (Apparently)



9. Be a bearded woman

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

We have a sneaking feeling we've seen something like this before.

10. Have no small change

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot



Do those things even exist?!

11. Not give a tip

He really doesn't care.

12. Cut onions

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

If nothing else, it's a good way to make sure no-one wants to sit next to you.

13. Grate cheese

Well, you've already done the onions. You might as well.

14. Bring a robot and a jar of mustard

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

...nope. We genuinely have no idea what this one's about.

15. Play a drum

Naturally.

16. Have a big nose

Or as Akboga puts it, a "potato nose."

We think that's pretty mean. The girl in the video doesn't even have *that* big a nose.

17. Wear a rabbit costume

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

Cute alert.

18. Take selfies

Because if you didn't take a selfie on



the tube, did you even go on the tube?

19. Camouflage yourself against the seats

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

Story continues below...

WHERE DID SHE GO?!



19. Do the splits

*"Only we love you just as you are."
Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot*

Of course, some of the video's points should definitely be taken with a pinch of salt - but BVG aren't about to let that get in the way of their fun.

"Some lines contradict the terms of transportation? We don't care," the company commented on its Facebook post about the video.

Image: Facebook screenshot



"Of course we're joking about many things in the video," Langer told The Local.

"This is just our way of saying: it's not important to us what you look like or where you come from. It's just important that you're a nice person - and that you buy a ticket!"

Yep: even BVG draws the line at some things.

Basically, you're not allowed to:



1. Not have a ticket

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

It's all fun and games until someone dresses up as a ticket machine to hide from the conductor.

2. Not have any cash on you

Image: BVG / YouTube screenshot

In conclusion: bring your horse, your onions, your robot, your crop top and your pug. Just don't forget your wallet.

Happy travelling!

(Oh, and if the video doesn't go viral, BVG doesn't care.)

The Local Europe GmbH Schwedter Strasse 227 10435 Berlin Germany



Weil wir dich lieben Manche Zeilen widersprechen den Beförderungsbedingungen? Ist uns egal.

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The Berners Street Hoax

hoaxes.org


In 1810 London was the largest, wealthiest city in the world, linked by trade with every continent, and fed by the

manufacturing might of northern British cities such as Liverpool and Manchester. Almost anything could be obtained in its shops, and on Monday, November 26 of that year, all of this mercantile abundance focused for one day upon a single residential address: 54 Berners Street, the home of Mrs. Tottenham (in some sources spelled Tottingham).

The scene began in the morning when multiple tradesmen simultaneously arrived outside No. 54 to make deliveries. According to a contemporary account (*The London Annual Register for the year 1810*) these deliveries included "Waggons laden with coals from the Paddington wharfs, upholsterers' goods in cart-loads, organs, pianofortes, linen, jewellery, and every other description of furniture."



Berners Street Hoax

"The Berners Street Hoax" from *The Choice Humorous Works of Theodore Hook*

Berners Street was located in a wealthy part of London, directly off of Oxford Street. Mrs. Tottenham herself was described by newspapers as "a woman of fortune." Her neighbors included some of the most important people in the city including the bishops of

Carlisle and of Chester, Lady Coote, Count Woronzow, Earl Stanhope, and Lady Bensley. No. 54 was a particularly "large and handsome house." (It was later converted into a hospital, eventually torn down, and today is the site of the exclusive Sanderson Hotel.)

Because of Mrs. Tottenham's social status, she herself would not have answered the door in

response to the tradesmen. Instead, a maid would have been sent to do this, and the maid's anxiety must quickly have mounted because none of the deliveries fast arriving had been ordered by the household.

And yet more tradespeople kept showing up, all insisting they had received notes requesting their presence, until soon a huge crowd of angry, shouting merchants had collected outside the front door. Newspaper accounts emphasized the bizarre diversity of the professions represented: six men bearing an organ, wine porters with permits, barbers with wigs, mantua-makers with band-boxes, and opticians with their various articles of trade.



The Sanderson Hotel, located at the former site of No. 54 Berners Street. (Note truck making deliveries)

The scene grew even more out-of-control in the middle of the day when the Lord Mayor of London arrived in his carriage accompanied by two of his livery servants and tried to make his way to No. 54. He told the policemen on the scene (who had by then arrived in response to the growing chaos) that he had

received a letter from Mrs. Tottenham in which she said she had been summoned to appear before him, but was confined to her room by sickness and asked if he would do the favor of calling on her. Realizing the letter had been a fake, the Mayor quickly departed.

But as the afternoon progressed, tradespeople continued to arrive: accoucheurs, tooth-drawers, miniature-painters, artists of every description, auctioneers, grocers, mercers, post chaises, mourning coaches, poultry sellers, &c. At one point, even an undertaker showed up, bearing a coffin made to measure.

Adding to the mayhem was a large crowd of laughing, unruly spectators who gathered to observe the bizarre event. At the height of the commotion, there were so many people crowded into the street that it was hard even to move.

Eventually police officers blocked off both ends of Berners street in order to prevent more people from entering. Still, it was well past dark before the crowd dispersed.

The cause of this bedlam, it was soon realized, was some unknown prankster who had sent letters in Mrs. Tottenham's name to tradespeople throughout London, requesting their presence at her home. Since she was a wealthy woman, all these requests had been honored. London newspapers reproduced some samples of these notes:

Mrs. Tottenham requests Mr. _____ will call upon her, at two to-morrow, as she wishes to consult him about the sale of an estate — 54, Berners Street, Monday.

Mrs. Tottenham requests that a post chaise and four, may be at her house at two to-morrow to convey her to the first stage towards Bath — 54, Berners street, Monday.

Mrs. Tottenham begs the hon. Mr. _____ will be good enough to give her a call at two to-morrow, as Mrs. T. is desirous of speaking to him on business of importance — 54, Berners street, Monday.

The police offered a reward "for the apprehension of the criminal hoax."

Public Reaction

The Berners Street Hoax, as the event soon came to be known, generated enormous public interest. Newspapers described it at length, and Annual Registers included it as one of the notable events in London for the year 1810.

One sign of the hoax's notoriety is that by 1811 references to it were being incorporated into London stage productions. For instance, a review of a play performed at the Lyceum Theatre in early 1811 includes this line: "A spirited epilogue was spoken by Mrs. Edwin, in which an allusion to the late hoax in Berners street was highly relished by the audience." (*The Universal Magazine*, Vol 15, 1811: 63). The hoax was similarly referenced in a performance at Covent Garden.

Contemporary accounts criticized the hoax for its cruelty, especially since its victim was a woman who had apparently done nothing to deserve being singled out in that way. The London *Annual Register* described it as "a malignant species of wit."

And yet, the criticisms were muted by a sense of fascination with the sheer spectacle the hoax conjured up. An article in an unnamed London paper (reproduced in May 1811 in the *Baltimore Repertory*) declared it to be, "The greatest hoax that has ever been heard of in this metropolis."

This fascination occurred, to a great degree, because London — the city itself — was the true star of the hoax. The growth of cities was one of the great social changes that occurred during the nineteenth century. Every day more people were leaving the countryside to live in cities, and the experience of the hustle and bustle of the urban environment, living surrounded by hundreds of thousands of strangers, was recognized as a distinctly new, modern phenomenon. The Berners Street hoax successfully dramatized both the sheer amount of resources the city put at people's disposal, as well as the chaos of urban living. In fact, it created a massive traffic jam — a phenomenon that would eventually become a well-known aspect of city life.

The Perpetrator

The identity of the person responsible for the hoax was not initially known. But by 1812 a lead suspect had emerged: a young, well-born writer of popular comic operas named Theodore Hook. (Hook would have been twenty-two at the time of the hoax.) The Nov 1st, 1812 issue of

The Satirist or Monthly Meteor includes a brief note declaring that Hook was "grievously suspected of the Berners Street Hoax." Hook had acquired a reputation as a playboy and practical joker, so he was a natural suspect.



Theodore Hook

Theodore Hook at the age of 20

Decades later, Hook confessed, in a roundabout fashion. In his semi-autobiographical work *Gilbert Gurney*, he included a character, Dray, who declares at one point:

"There's nothing like fun — what else made the effect in Berner's Street? I am the man — I did it; sent a Lord Mayor in state, to release impressed seamen — philosophers and sages to look at children with two heads a-piece — piano-fortes by dozens, and coal waggons by scores — two thousand five hundred raspberry tarts from half-a-hundred

pastry-cooks — a squad of surgeons — a battalion of physicians, and a legion of apothecaries — lovers to see sweethearts; ladies to find lovers — upholsterers to furnish houses, and architects to build them — gigs, dog-carts, and glass-coaches, enough to convey half the freeholders of Middlesex to Brentford. Nay, I despatched even Royalty itself on an errand to a respectable widow lady, whose concourse of visitors, by my special invitation, choked up the great avenues of London, and found employment for half the police of the metropolis."

However, no criminal charges were ever brought against Hook. In fact, the hoax probably elevated his reputation.

One of Hook's biographers, R.H. Dalton Barham, writing in 1849, claimed Hook had two accomplices whom he identified as "Mr. H _____ and Mrs. _____, a celebrated actress." Mr. H was probably Henry Higginson, a friend of Hook's whom he had met at Brasenose College, Oxford. The identity of the actress is unknown.

Beginning in the 1840s, accounts of the hoax regularly include that Hook and his accomplices rented a room in a Berners Street house in order to be able to observe the chaos they had created. It's also said that Hook and his friends wrote 1000 letters (or, in some accounts, as many as 4000) to tradespeople throughout London. This took them weeks of planning and preparation.

Motive

The sheer randomness of Hook's victim was one of the unusual features of the hoax. There was no apparent connection between Hook and Mrs. Tottenham, no reason for him to single her out. On November 26, chaos just descended upon her out of the blue.

J.G. Lockhart, in an 1843 article in *The Quarterly Review*, was the first to suggest that Hook's motive was a simple bet for one guinea between him and a friend (often suggested to be the architect Samuel Beazley). Apparently the two men were walking down Berners Street when Hook pointed to No. 54 and said, "I'll lay you a guinea that in one week that nice modest dwelling shall be the most famous in all London" (or words to that effect).

Hook also had a habit of selecting random victims for his pranks. Hook was highly regarded within his circle of upper-class friends for his ability to show up at the front door of any random stranger and talk his way into securing an invitation to that night's dinner.

Barham also argues that the Berners street hoax had a hidden satirical purpose. He claims that, although it was not reported by papers at the time, more dignitaries than just the Lord Mayor of London showed up at No. 54 Berners street that day. And that Hook's true purpose was to embarrass these dignitaries by hinting at the possible revelation of scandalous information:

Completely familiar with London gossip, and by no means scrupulous in the use of any information he might possess, Hook addressed a variety of persons of consideration, taking care to introduce allusion to some peculiar point sure of attracting attention, and invariably closing with an invitation to No. 54, Berners street. Certain revelations to be made respecting a complicated system of fraud pursued at the Bank of England, brought the Governor of that establishment, a similar device was employed to allure the Chairman of the East India Company, while the Duke of Gloucester started off with his equerry to receive a communication from a dying woman, formerly a confidential attendant on His Royal Highness's mother.

But it's also worth noting that the idea for the hoax was not original to Hook. Similar hoaxes had been perpetrated before, quite recently. London papers reported that on October 31, 1809 a hoaxer had sent numerous tradesmen to the home of Mr. Griffith, an apothecary who lived in Bedford Street, Covent Garden. Apparently this hoax was a form of payback, since Mr. Griffith had once given the hoaxer a medicine "which did him no good".

So the idea of pranking a victim by sending numerous unwanted tradesmen to their home was, at the time, part of the repertoire of young playboy-pranksters such as Hook. J.P. Malcolm wrote in *An Historical Sketch of the Art of Caricaturing* (1813):

Posterity should be informed that it has lately been the practice of certain merry gentlemen to write circular letters to professional men and tradesmen, appointing them to attend at an appointed hour and place, with their terms and various articles of sale and manufacture, which place is invariably the habitation of a person perfectly unconscious of the approach of the proposed assembly, whose confusion and dismay, and the uproar caused by the persons, forms the reward of the deceiver or *hoaxer*.

Although Hook couldn't claim originality, what did make his hoax stand apart, in the eyes of his contemporaries, was its sheer size. Grace and Philip Wharton wrote in *The Wits and*

Beaux of Society (1861):

It was not the idea of the hoax — simple enough in itself — which was entitled to the admiration accorded to ingenuity, but its extent and success, and the clever means taken by the conspirators to insure the attendance of every one who ought not to have been there.

Imitations

Just as the Berners Street hoax was not the first such prank of its kind, nor was it the last. In *Gilbert Gurney* Hook acknowledged that versions of the hoax continued to be perpetrated, but dismissed these as mere imitations of his own work, having the character Daly say, "Copy the joke, and it ceases to be one."

Below are listed some notable later instances of Berners-street-style hoaxes:

- In 1881, over thirty people showed up for a party at the home of Archdeacon Lear, who was Canon in residence at Salisbury Cathedral. They had all received letters of invitation, written in a lady's handwriting. However, the Archdeacon had no knowledge of such a party. Also sent were numerous goods, including three tons of coal, and two large classes of schoolchildren presented themselves.
- On October 24, 1951, Mrs. William Spreen of 166 22nd Avenue in San Francisco had to answer her door all day in response to deliverymen and tradespeople sent by an unidentified hoaxer. Deliveries included "orchids, corsages, a Chinese Mandarin dinner for 21 people, ice cream, and a host of other articles." Tradespeople included "plumbers on emergency calls, doctors on the same, and mechanics".
- The Berners Street hoax is also the distant ancestor of the Pizza Prank, which continues to be frequently perpetrated at colleges and universities. This prank involves arranging to have numerous unwanted pizzas delivered to a victim's residence.

Links and References

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Comments

Excellent work on this incident, which I had been **very** sceptical about. Thanks.

Posted by Mike Paterson in London on Fri Nov 18, 2011 at 11:22 AM

Good thing there were no Pizza Hut's in 1810 London.

Posted by Paul in San Antonio, Tx on Wed Feb 29, 2012 at 02:23 PM

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The bones from dozens of cadavers were used to create these 18th century anatomical wax models

strangerremains.com

By strangerremains on December 23, 2013 • (1)



From Wikipedia, Lelli's "flayed" men on display at the Palazzo Poggi

Museo di Palazzo Poggi was founded in 1714 to house the Istituto dell Scienze of Bologna. The Anatomical and Obstetrics Collection is

located at the Palazzo Poggi and includes ~~some~~ rare 18th century anatomical wax works. Some of these wax sculptures include figures created by sculptor Ercole Lelli, (1702-1766) who was considered one of the most talented anatomical artists of his time.

In October 1742, Pope Benedict XIV commissioned The Camera della Notomia (The anatomy room) at the institute to include detailed wax anatomical models. As "figure director" at the Accademia Clementina delle Belle Arti housed in Palazzo Poggi, Lelli was responsible for planning and creating the anatomical wax figures to complete the papal commission, which included eight life-size figures: a male and female nude, and six "flayed men."



Photo from the Museo di Palazzo Poggi showing Ercole Lelli's anatomical figures.

The male and female nudes, dubbed "Adam" and "Eve", bookend the collection. Between the nudes are the flayed men, or écorchés, whose skin and muscles are pulled away to reveal deeper layers of tissue. The final two works are a male and female skeleton, which mirror the Adam and Eve nudes. Lelli's anatomical figures were built using

real human bones wired together, and the models were sculpted in classical poses, similar to marble statues from the same period. To finish the display, Lelli had to the acquire skeletal remains from dozens of cadavers.



Sources:

Atlas Obscura

Museo di Palazzo Poggi

The Lady Anatomist

1 reply

1. Brittius

December 23, 2013 • 6:06 am

Reblogged this on Brittius.com.

Dolly Stolze is the writer and editor of Strange Remains, a blog site about human remains, bizarre history, and even weirder excavations.

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The Key of Hell: an 18th-Century Manual on Black Magic

publicdomainreview.org



hell-banner

The *Clavis Inferni* ("The Key of Hell") by Cyprianus, is a late-18th-century book on black magic. Written in a mixture of Latin, Hebrew, and a cipher alphabet (namely that of Cornelius Agrippa's *Transitus Fluvii* or "Passing through the River" from the *Third Book of Occult Philosophy* written around 1510) the book has remained rather mysterious due to its unknown origin and context. It is said to be a textbook of the Black School at Wittenburg, a supposed school somewhere in Germany where one could learn the dark arts. As for the name of the author, it seems to have become a common name for people practicing magic. Benjamin Breen writes in *The Appendix* of how the existence throughout history of various magically-inclined Cyprianuses – from "a Dane [...] who was so evil that Satan cast him out of hell" to the Greek wizard St. Cyprian of Antioch (who later converted to Christianity) – led to the name becoming a popular pseudonym for "people at the edges of society who were trying to do real black magic".

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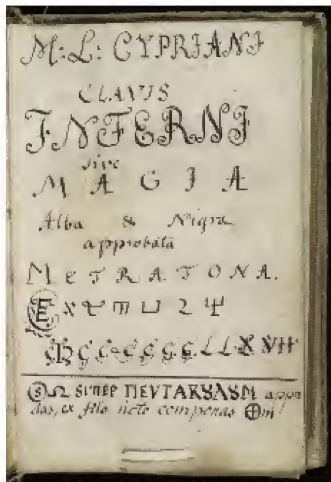


L0036625 Kings of the East, West, South, North. Cyprianus, 18th



L0036621 Seal of Approbata, from Cyprianus, 18th C

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L0036628 Dragon devouring a lizard, from Cyprianus, 18th C



L0036629 Gold seal from Cyprianus, 18th C

When a volcano erupted on a small island in Indonesia in 1883, the evening skies of the world glowed for months with strange colours. Richard Hamblyn explores a little-known series of letters that the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins sent in to the journal *Nature* describing the phenomenon – letters that would constitute the majority of the small handful of writings published while he was alive.



Lithograph from 1888 showing the Krakatoa eruption, author unknown.

During the winter of 1883 the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins descended into one of his periodic depressions, “a wretched state of weakness and weariness, I can’t tell why,” he wrote, “always drowsy and incapable of reading or thinking to any effect.” It was partly boredom: Hopkins was ungainfully employed at a Catholic boarding school in Lancashire, where much of his time was spent steering his pupils through their university entrance exams. The thought that he was wasting his time and talents weighed heavily upon him during the long, brooding walks he took through the “sweet landscape” of Ribblesdale, “thy lovely dale”, as he described it in one of the handful of poems he managed to compose that winter. He was about to turn forty and felt trapped.

Such was his state of mind when the Krakatoa sunsets began.

The tiny volcanic island of Krakatoa (located halfway between Java and Sumatra) had staged a spectacular eruption at the end of August 1883, jettisoning billions of tonnes of ash and debris deep into the earth’s upper atmosphere. Nearly 40,000 people had been killed by a series of mountainous waves thrown out by the force of the explosion: the Javan port of Anjer had been almost completely destroyed, along with more than a hundred coastal towns and villages. “All gone. Plenty lives lost”, as a telegram sent from Serang reported, and for weeks afterwards the bodies of the drowned continued to wash up along the shoreline. Meanwhile, the vast volcanic ash-cloud had spread into a semi-opaque band that threaded slowly westward around the equator, forming memorable sunsets and afterglows across the earth’s lower latitudes. A few weeks later, the stratospheric veil moved outwards from the tropics to the poles, and by late October 1883 most of the world, including Britain, was being subjected to lurid evening displays, caused by the scattering of incoming light by the meandering volcanic haze. Throughout November and December, the skies flared through virulent shades of green, blue, copper and magenta, “more like inflamed flesh than the lucid reds of ordinary sunsets,” wrote Hopkins; “the glow is intense; that is what strikes everyone; it has prolonged the daylight, and optically changed the season; it bathes the whole sky, it is mistaken for the reflection of a great fire.”

In common with most other observers at the time, Hopkins had no idea what was causing the phenomenon, but he grew fascinated by the daily atmospheric displays, tracking their changing appearances over the course of that unsettled winter. At the end of December he collated his observations into a remarkable 2,000-word document, which he sent to the



Gerard Manley Hopkins in 1866, detail from a photo by Thomas C. Bayfield. National Portrait Gallery

leading science journal, *Nature*. The article, published in January 1884, was a masterpiece of reportage, a heightened prose poem that mixed rhapsodic literary experimentation with a high degree of meteorological rigour:

Above the green in turn appeared a red glow, broader and burlier in make; it was softly brindled, and in the ribs or bars the colour was rosier, in the channels where the blue of the sky shone through it was a mallow colour. Above this was a vague lilac. The red was first noticed 45° above the horizon, and spokes or beams could be seen in it, compared by one beholder to a man's open hand.

By 4.45 the red had driven out the green, and, fusing with the remains of the orange, reached the horizon. By that time the east, which had a rose tinge, became of a duller red, compared to sand; according to my observation, the ground of the sky in the east was green or else tawny, and the crimson only in the clouds. A great sheet of heavy dark cloud, with a reefed or puckered make, drew off the west in the course of the pageant: the edge of this and the smaller pellets of cloud that filed across the bright field of the sundown caught a livid green. At 5 the red in the west was fainter, at 5.20 it became notably rosier and livelier; but it was never of a pure rose. A faint dusky blush was left as late as 5.30, or later. While these changes were going on in the sky, the landscape of Ribblesdale glowed with a frowning brown. (from G. M. Hopkins, "The Remarkable Sunsets", *Nature* 29 (3 January 1884), pp. 222-23)

Hopkins was a gifted empirical observer with a near-forensic interest in the search for written equivalents to the complexity of the natural world. Such interest in the language of precision was shared by many scientists at the time, science, like poetry, being an inherently descriptive enterprise. Anyone who reads the official Royal Society report on the Krakatoa sunsets (published in 1888) will find flights of poetic prose to rival those of Hopkins, who described such language as "the current language heightened and unlike itself," a dynamic written form that was particularly suited to the expression of what he called "inscape": the distinctive unity of all natural phenomena that gives everything in nature its characterising beauty and uniqueness. The force of being that holds these dynamic identities together he termed "instress", instress being the essential energy that enables an observer to recognise the inscape of another being. These post-Romantic notions formed a kind of personal poetic creed, a logocentric natural theology that was rooted in the work of Duns Scotus, the medieval Christian philosopher.

For Hopkins, inscape and instress lay at the heart of his religious and poetic practice, as well as being vital means of apprehending the natural world. In a journal entry for 22 April 1871, for instance, he records "such a lovely damasking in the sky as today I never felt before. The blue was charged with simple instress, the higher, zenith sky earnest and frowning, lower more light and sweet." Note that he felt the damasking as well as saw it, and note, too, his



Photograph taken in 1928 of the destroyed Krakatoa island resurfacing, forming what is known now as 'Anak Krakatau', or 'Child of Krakatoa'. Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT).

calibrated descriptions of the banded blues of the sky, the higher "earnest and frowning", the lower "more light and sweet." His journals are full of such poetic quantifications, which he used as notes towards a quintet of articles that he published in the journal *Nature*, all on meteorological subjects. The first two, published in November 1882 and November 1883, were letters describing anti-crepuscular rays (cloud-shadows that appear in the evening sky opposite the sun), while the following three were all on the subject of the Krakatoa sunsets, which had evidently furnished the melancholy Hopkins with a much-needed source of distraction.

He was not alone in his interest; all over the world, writers, artists and scientists responded to the drama of the volcanic skies. The poets Algernon Swinburne,

Robert Bridges and Alfred Tennyson (then poet laureate), wrote lengthy descriptive strophes prompted by the unearthly twilights, although, as the historian Richard Altick pointed out, "the only good poetry that resulted from the celestial displays is found in Hopkins' prose" (Richard D. Altick, "Four Victorian Poets and an Exploding Island", *Victorian Studies* 3 (March 1960), p. 258). This is a fair assessment, though I do have a sneaking fondness for Tennyson's blank-verse approximation of the cadences of Victorian popular science:

Had the fierce ashes of some fiery peak
 Been hurl'd so high they ranged about the globe?
 For day by day, thro' many a blood-red eve . . .
 The wrathful sunset glared . . . ("St. Telemachus", pub. 1892)

Visual artists also found themselves extending their colour ranges in awed emulation of the skies. Painter William Ascroft spent many evenings making pastel sky-sketches from the banks of the Thames at Chelsea, noting his frustration that he "could only secure in a kind of chromatic shorthand the heart of the effect, as so much of the beauty of afterglow consisted in concentration." He exhibited more than five hundred of these highly-coloured pastels in the galleries of the Science Museum, in the repository of which they remain to this day, little known and rarely seen.

In Oslo, by contrast, the sunsets helped inspire one of the world's best-known paintings: Edvard Munch was walking with some friends one evening as the sun descended through the haze: "it was as if a flaming sword of blood slashed open the vault of heaven," he recalled; "the atmosphere turned to blood – with glaring tongues of fire – the hills became deep blue – the fjord shaded into cold blue – among the yellow and red colours – that garish blood-red – on the road – and the railing – my companions' faces became yellow-white – I felt something like a great scream – and truly I heard a great scream." His painting *The Scream* (1893), of which he made several versions, is an enduring (and much stolen) expressionist masterpiece, a vision of human desolation writhing beneath an apocalyptic sky, as "a great



Lithograph from 1888 showing the Krakatoa eruption, author unknown. Gerard Manley Hopkins in 1866, detail from a photo by Thomas C. Bayfield. National Portrait Gallery Photograph taken in 1928 of the destroyed Krakatoa island resurfacing, forming what is known now as 'Anak Krakatau', or 'Child of Krakatoa'. Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). Three of the hundreds of sketches carried out by William Ascroft in the winter of 1883/4 - used as the frontispiece of *The Eruption of Krakatoa, and Subsequent Phenomena: Report of the Krakatoa committee of the Royal Society (1888)*, ed. by G.J. Simmons. Three of the hundreds of sketches carried out by William Ascroft in the winter of 1883/4 - used as the frontispiece of *The Eruption of Krakatoa, and Subsequent Phenomena: Report of the Krakatoa committee of the Royal Society (1888)*, ed. by G.J. Simmons.



Lithograph from 1888 showing the Krakatoa eruption, author unknown. Gerard Manley Hopkins in 1866, detail from a photo by Thomas C. Bayfield. National Portrait Gallery Photograph taken in 1928 of the destroyed Krakatoa island resurfacing, forming what is known now as 'Anak Krakatau', or 'Child of Krakatoa'. Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). Three of the hundreds of sketches carried out by William Ascroft in the winter of 1883/4 - used as the frontispiece of *The Eruption of Krakatoa, and Subsequent Phenomena: Report of the Krakatoa committee of the Royal Society (1888)*, ed. by G.J. Simmons. Three of the hundreds of sketches carried out by William Ascroft in the winter of 1883/4 - used as the frontispiece of *The Eruption of Krakatoa, and Subsequent Phenomena: Report of the Krakatoa committee of the Royal Society (1888)*, ed. by G.J. Simmons.

unending scream pierces through nature." As it happens, the final eruption of Krakatoa on 27 August 1883 was the loudest sound ever recorded, travelling almost 5,000 km, and heard over nearly a tenth of the earth's surface: a great scream indeed.

As for Hopkins, the publication of his Krakatoa essay coincided with the welcome offer of a professorship in classics at University College Dublin. He left Lancashire for Ireland in February 1884, relieved to have made his escape. It didn't last. Homesick, lonely and overworked, Hopkins succumbed to his worst depression yet, his misery traced in the so-called "terrible" sonnets of 1885 ("I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day"). He died of typhoid fever in June 1889 (aged 44), and was buried in an unmarked grave. Only his close friend

Robert Bridges was aware of his greatness as a poet, and the bulk of his work remained unpublished until 1918. In fact, apart from a handful of minor poems that had appeared in obscure periodicals, the five *Nature* articles were the only works that Hopkins published in his lifetime.



Richard Hamblyn's books include *The Invention of Clouds*

, which won the 2002 Los Angeles Times Book Prize and was shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize; *Terra: Tales of the Earth* (2009), a study of natural disasters; and *The Art of Science* (2011), an anthology of readable

Three of the hundreds of sketches carried out by William Ascroft in the winter of 1883/4 - used as the frontispiece of *The Eruption of Krakatoa, and Subsequent Phenomena: Report of the Krakatoa committee of the Royal Society* (1888), ed. by G.J. Simmons.

science writing from the Babylonians to the Higgs Boson. He is a lecturer in creative writing at Birkbeck, University of London.

Links to Works

- Letters by Gerard Manley Hopkins in *Nature*, Vol XXIX, November 1883 to April 1884.
 - "The Remarkable Sunsets", p.222-3, Jan 3rd 1884
 - "Shadow-Beams in the East at Sunset", p.55, Nov 17th 1883
 - "Green Sun", p.7, Nov 1st 1883
- Letter by Gerard Manley Hopkins in *Nature*, Vol XXVII, November 1882 to April 1883.
 - "A Curious Halo", p.55, Nov 16th 1882
- *The Eruption of Krakatoa, and Subsequent Phenomena: Report of the Krakatoa committee of the Royal Society* (1888), Ed. by G.J. Simmons.
 - Internet Archive link

Recommended Readings

- *The Art of Science: A Natural History of Ideas* (2011), by Richard Hamblyn.
- *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Visual World* (2008), by Catherine Phillips.

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March 12, 2010 By Andrea Aker

Excerpt from Arizoniana by Marshall Trimble, the state's official historian.

Most folks will tell you camels are not found in Arizona's high country. Truth is, those adaptable beasts can thrive in just about any kind of terrain. The U.S. Army introduced camels to the Southwest back in the 1850s, using them as beasts of burden while surveying a road across northern Arizona. But, the Civil War interrupted the great camel experiment, and most of the homely critters were sold at auction. A few were turned loose to run wild—and therein lies the basis for the legend of Red Ghost.

The story begins back in 1883 at a lonely ranch near Eagle Creek in southeastern Arizona. The Apache wars were drawing to a close. However, a few renegade bands were on the prowl, keeping isolated ranches in a constant state of siege. Early one morning, two men rode out to check on the livestock leaving their wives at the ranch with the children. About midmorning, one of the women went down to the spring to fetch a bucket of water while the other remained in the house with the children.

Suddenly one of the dogs began to bark ferociously. The woman inside the house heard a terrifying scream. Looking out the window, she saw a huge, reddish-hued beast run by with a devilish-looking creature strapped on its back.

The frightened woman barricaded herself in the house and waited anxiously for the men to return. That night they found the body of the other woman, trampled to death. Next day tracks were found, cloven hoof prints much larger than those of a horse, along with long strands of reddish hair.

A few days later, a party of prospectors near Clifton were awakened by the sound of thundering hoofs and ear-piercing screams. Their tent collapsed, and the men clawed their way out of the tangle just in time to see a gigantic creature run off in the moonlight. The next day, they too, found huge clovenhoof prints and long, red strands of hair clinging to the brush.



camel_sunset

Naturally these stories grew and were embellished by local raconteurs. One man claimed he saw the beast kill and eat a grizzly bear. Another insisted he had chased the Red Ghost, only to have it disappear before his eyes.

A few months after the incident with the miners, Cyrus Hamblin, a rancher on the Salt River, rode up on the animal while rounding up cows. Hamblin recognized the beast as a camel, with something tied to its back that resembled the skeleton of a man. Although Hamblin had a reputation as an honest man and one not given to tall tales, many refused to believe his story. Several weeks

later, over on the Verde River, the camel was spotted again, this time by another group of prospectors. They, too, saw something attached to the animal's back. Grabbing their weapons they fired at the camel but missed. The animal bolted and ran, causing a piece of the strange object to fall to the ground. What the miners saw made the hair bristle on their necks. On the ground lay a human skull with some parts of flesh and hair still attached.

A few days later, the Red Ghost struck again. This time the victims' were teamsters camped beside a lonely road. They said they were awakened in the middle of the night by a loud scream. According to the terrified drivers, a creature at least 30-feet-tall knocked over two freight wagons and generally raised hell with the camp. The men ran for their lives and hid in the brush. Returning the next day, they found

cloven-hoof prints and red strands of hair.

About a year later, a cowboy near Phoenix came upon the Red Ghost eating grass in a corral. Traditionally, cowboys have been unable to resist the temptation to rope anything that wears hair, and this fellow was no exception. He built a fast loop in his rope and tossed it over the camel's head. Suddenly the angry beast turned and charged. The cowboy's horse tried to dodge, but to no avail. Horse and rider went down, and as the camel galloped off in a cloud of dust, the astonished cowboy recognized the skeletal remains of a man lashed to its back.

During the next few years, stories of the Red Ghost grew to legendary proportions. The creature made its last appearance nine years later in eastern Arizona. A rancher awoke one morning and saw the huge animal casually grazing in his garden. He drew a careful bead with his trusty Winchester and dropped the beast with one shot. An examination of the corpse convinced all that this was indeed the fabled Red Ghost. The animal's back was heavily scarred from rawhide strips that had been used to tie down the body of a man. Some of the leather strands had cut into the camel's flesh. But how the human body came to be attached to the back of the camel remains a cruel mystery.

Comments

1. Don Balmessays

March 13, 2010 at 9:26 am

WOW, I have lived in Arizona 79 years and have never heard or read of that great story. Thanks much Marshall – I found that very interesting and it is very well written.
Don

• **Paul M. Carrollsays**

May 20, 2013 at 1:56 pm

The TV show, Death Valley Days, ran episode called, "The Red Ghost of Eagle Creek," which I believe was about this poor camel with its dead rider strapped to its back.

2. Russel McCollomsays

March 13, 2010 at 10:17 am

I used to live down by Yuma, Az. and had read of camels being used back in the early days. But I never read or heard of the Red Ghost legend. Very interesting. Thanks for sharing it for all to read.

Russel.

3. Cipriano Floressays

January 6, 2011 at 12:40 am

I cannot recall what issue of Arizona highways this article appeared in but it was about this couple that were out driving around southwestern Arizona and witnessed large camel-like creature of unusual red color walking up a hillside and disappearing over a ridge. The people were so astonished by this sight, they reported it to the local authorities who went on to investigate it. They found nothing unusual except a group of indians who acknowledged knowing about this creature but would leave it alone when they saw it. They did not know what this creature was and would not bother it.

4. Jacob Allensays

January 9, 2012 at 6:04 pm

Dear god, I live in Pennsylvania, so feel free not to believe me, but I saw this beast before on a country road really late at night, I was strolling along and I heard an intense scream, I look to my right and I see the huge monster and after a moment of gazing at it, it fades away. Mortified I ran home, and I still remember that story today.

5. Rocksays

July 11, 2012 at 10:45 am

I saw a story on tv about this last night. They said the body was a soldier in the Army who was scared to death of camels, so to get him used to them, he was tied to the saddle of one of the animals, and then it ran away!

6. Mark Whitworthsays

August 22, 2012 at 12:18 am

TO ALL YOU GOOD OLD ARIZONA BOYS OUT THERE!! JUST SAW THIS STORY ON TV LAST NIGHT AGAIN, FOR I'VE SEEN THIS STORY BEFORE ON A TV SHOW (DEATH VALLEY DAYS) MANY YEARS AGO WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER AS A STORY ABOUT THE OLD WEST? I'VE ALSO HEARD THERE ARE DECENDENTS OF THOSE ARMY CAMELS STILL ROAMING THE SOUTHWEST?

7. Melindasays

June 22, 2013 at 5:31 am

I just watched an episode of Mysteries at the Museum and they showed the legend of this. The story goes he was a military man afraid of the camel so he was tied to it. Unfortunately the animal got away from them and ran off so the man was tied to its back until he died. Giving birth to the "Red Ghost of Eagle Creek". I have lived in Arizona my entire life and never heard of this before!!! Strange isn't it!!!

8. gwyllionsays

September 5, 2013 at 4:20 pm

poor camel

Trackbacks

1. **Quartzsite's Legend of A Camel Driver** | says:

June 15, 2012 at 7:23 pm

[...] sold off to private enterprises or turned loose on the desert. One of them became known as the Red Ghost and allegedly stomped a woman to death, and the Hi Jolly legend says that when he died, he was out [...]

2. **The Red Ghost | County Island** says:

September 10, 2012 at 9:22 pm

[...] It was a dark and stormy mornin around the County Island, the kinda mornin that don't loom too often in these parts, where the clouds turn black as night and rumbly, and the sky rains rain like a giant horse is pissin down rain from the sky, if there was such a thing, which there ain't, and the rain lasts longer than most monsoons do. On days such as this, an old ranch horse has

perhaps too much time on his hooves to stand under a tree with the rain pourin down around him , and think darker thoughts. Oh, it don't actually get me spooked. Hardly nothin ever spooks me, to tell the truth. But it sets me to ponderin some of the stranger words I sometimes hear the people talk about. Like the legend of the Red Ghost. [...]

3. Sacred Sites | Boyman in the Promised Lan says:

January 1, 2013 at 10:15 am

[...] the project was abandoned and the camels were left to their own devices out in the wastelands; the last reported camel sighting was in the 1940's, nearly 100 years after the genesis of this weird [...]

4. Hi Jolly and the Legend of the Red Ghost says:

February 23, 2014 at 12:54 am

[...] arizonaoddities [...]

5. 25 Interesting Facts About Mummies and Corpses | KickassFacts.com says:

June 11, 2014 at 7:56 am

[...] 14. In the 1880s and 1890s, a camel roamed the Arizona desert for a decade with a corpse strapped to its back – Source [...]

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"IWPR runs a grants scheme to help Libyan media outlets grow"

A new Russian law on "ethnic minorities" has given the Shapsug people fresh hope of reclaiming their historical homeland

By Zarina Kanukova

The "Shapsugia" newspaper is the last remaining mouthpiece of the Shapsug people - a tiny North Caucasian tribe who claim their way of life is threatened with extinction.

"Shapsugia" may have a circulation of just 750 copies but it stands at the forefront of a stubborn movement to reclaim an ethnic homeland which was liquidated in 1945. And this, say the Shapsugs, is their last hope of preserving their ancient culture and traditions.

In the beginning of the 18th century, the Shapsugs occupied a sizeable territory stretching from the River Pshada to the Kuban. In the 1830s, the first Russian expeditions into the Caucasus recorded a Shapsug population of up to 300,000 people.

Today, there are just 10,000 Shapsugs living in scattered communities along the Black Sea coast. Isolated from their ethnic kin - the Cherkess, the Adygeans and the Balkars - they consider themselves a nation under threat.

In many ways, they have managed to preserve their culture better than most - with family life based around the patriarchal aul and Islamic beliefs diluted with ancient pagan rituals. But, in the post-Soviet wilderness, unemployment and alcoholism are taking their toll whilst local officials have little patience for their ethnic concerns.

Consequently, the "Shapsugia" newspaper is fighting a lonely battle. Deputy editor Anzor Nibo explains, "Only work and study can save a man from drink. But today there are few enough young people who can find themselves work and few enough parents who can send their children to school."

Nibo went on to say that the Shapsug language was now only taught in the family circle while local television devoted just one programme a week to ethnic issues - and this was broadcast in Russian.

The newspaper had been working closely with the Adyge Khase - a Shapsug council of elders -- to set up cultural and informational links with related ethnic groups across the North Caucasus. Approaches had been made to the International Cherkess Association, now based in Nalchik, but it soon became evident that their Adygean cousins had problems of their own...

"Shapsugia's" editor, Aslanbi Khadjibramovich, is more outspoken. He claims the Shapsug people are literally faced with extinction. Low on cash and low on self-esteem, the younger generation are increasingly loathe to marry within their own ethnic group. The birth rate has never been lower.

"If this continues," says Khadjibramovich, "we will simply disappear".

The Shapsug nationalist movement was born in the early 1990s in a bid to reinstate the Shapsug autonomous enclave - part of the Krasnodarsky Region -- which was dissolved in May 1945.

In May 1994, a Shapsug congress in the settlement of Shkhafit elected a "social parliament", the Adyge Khase, with 35 members and defined its long-term goals. Delegates called for national autonomy as well as concrete initiatives to protect the cultural identity and historical legacy of the Shapsug people.

In June 1998, the Adyge Khase received backing from the Fourth Congress of the International Cherkess Association which pledged to "support the demands of the Black Sea Shapsugs for a legal strengthening of their rights as well as full representation in the Krasnodarsky regional administration

and the reinstatement of Shapsug place names which were abandoned after the Caucasian wars of the 19th century."

However, the Shapsug cause has progressed little in the last two years. The new Duma law introduced in March this year "to guarantee the rights of minority peoples in the Russian Federation" may have brought some hope. Among other privileges, it excuses members of any group numbering less than 50,000 people from military service and promises a degree of self-determination.

But M Chachukh, the president of the Adyge Khase, is philosophical. "It's pointless to demand the restoration of our ethnic homeland at this juncture," he says. "In fact, that's not our main concern at the moment. The main thing is that we've been granted the status of a 'minority people' and the rights that go with it."

And yet there are fears that the new law could prove to be a double-edged sword, isolating the Shapsugs still further from their ethnic kin in the North Caucasus and creating a "pariah enclave" on the Black Sea coast.

Even now, the locals are working hard to cash in on the tourist industry which is booming around Sochi. A resident of the Akhyntam settlement, Achmiz Aisa, has even turned his home into a tiny museum, dedicated to Shapsug culture. He tells his visitors traditional stories over a cup of tea and honey - and his guests have included Russian politicians, writers and emigres from Turkey, Syria and Jordan.

One Shapsug ,migr., Utizh Mazhid, brings groups of Cherkess from Turkey to visit the Shapsug settlements. "Maybe one day some of them will want to return to Shapsugia and settle here," says Mazhid. At present, it is a very distant dream.

8 Dec 00

CRS Issue 61

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In contrast to today's rather mundane spawn of coffeehouse chains, the London of the 17th and 18th century was home to an eclectic and thriving coffee drinking scene. Dr Matthew Green explores the halcyon days of the London coffeehouse, a haven for caffeine-fueled debate and innovation which helped to shape the modern world.



A disagreement about the Cartesian Dream Argument (or similar) turns sour. Note the man throwing coffee in his opponent's face. From the frontispiece of Ned Ward's satirical poem *Vulgus Britannicus* (1710) and probably more of a flight of fancy than a faithful depiction of coffeehouse practices – Source .

From the tar-caked wharves of Wapping to the gorgeous lamp-lit squares of St James's and Mayfair, visitors to eighteenth-century London were amazed by an efflorescence of coffeehouses. "In London, there are a great number of coffeehouses", wrote the Swiss noble César de Saussure in 1726, "...workmen habitually begin the day by going to coffee-rooms to read the latest news." Nothing was funnier, he smirked, than seeing shoeblacks and other riffraff poring over papers and discussing the latest political affairs. Scottish spy turned travel writer John Macky was similarly captivated in 1714. Sauntering into some of London's most prestigious establishments in St James's, Covent Garden and Cornhill, he marvelled at how strangers, whatever their social background or political allegiances, were always welcomed into lively convivial company. They were

right to be amazed: early eighteenth-century London boasted more coffeehouses than any other city in the western world, save Constantinople.

London's coffee craze began in 1652 when Pasqua Rosée, the Greek servant of a coffee-loving British Levant merchant, opened London's first coffeehouse (or rather, coffee shack) against the stone wall of St Michael's churchyard in a labyrinth of alleys off Cornhill. Coffee was a smash hit; within a couple of years, Pasqua was selling over 600 dishes of coffee a day to the horror of the local tavern keepers. For anyone who's ever tried seventeenth-century style coffee, this can come as something of a shock — unless, that is, you like your brew "black as hell, strong as death, sweet as love", as an old Turkish proverb recommends, and shot through with grit.

It's not just that our tastebuds have grown more discerning accustomed as we are to silky-smooth Flat Whites; contemporaries found it disgusting too. One early sampler likened it to a "syrup of soot and the essence of old shoes" while others were reminded of oil, ink, soot, mud, damp and shit. Nonetheless, people loved how the "bitter Mohammedan gruel", as *The London Spy* described it in 1701, kindled conversations, fired debates, sparked ideas and, as Pasqua himself pointed out in his handbill *The Virtue of the Coffee Drink* (1652), made one "fit for business" — his stall was a stone's throw from that great entrepôt of international commerce, the Royal Exchange.

A handbill published in 1652 to promote the launch of Pasqua Rosée's coffeehouse telling people how to drink coffee and hailing it as the miracle cure for just about every ailment under the sun including dropsy, scurvy, gout, scrofula and even "mis-carryings in childbearing women" – Source .

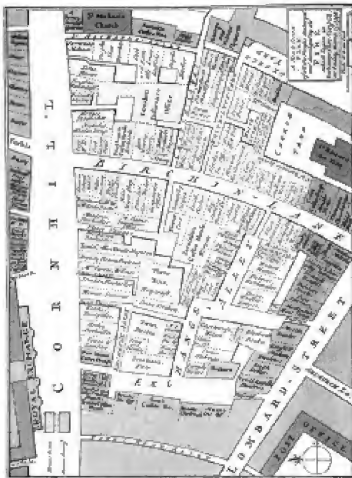
The meteoric success of Pasqua's shack triggered a coffeehouse boom. By 1656, there was a second coffeehouse at the sign of the rainbow on Fleet Street; by 1663, 82 had sprung up within the crumbling Roman walls, and a cluster further west like Will's in Covent Garden, a fashionable literary resort where Samuel Pepys found his old college chum John Dryden presiding over "very pleasant and witty discourse" in 1664 and wished he could stay longer — but he had to pick up his wife, who most certainly would not have been welcome.



respectable women would have been seen dead in a coffeehouse. It wasn't long before wives became frustrated at the amount of time their husbands were idling away "deposing princes, settling the bounds of kingdoms, and balancing the power of Europe with great justice and impartiality", as Richard Steele put it in the *Tatler*, all from the comfort of a fireside bench. In 1674, years of simmering resentment erupted into the volcano of fury that was the *Women's Petition Against Coffee*. The fair sex lambasted the "Excessive use of that Newfangled, Abominable, Heathenish Liquor called COFFEE" which, as they saw it, had reduced their virile industrious men into effeminate, babbling, French layabouts. Retaliation was swift and acerbic in the form of the vulgar *Men's Answer to the Women's Petition Against Coffee*, which claimed it was "base adulterate wine" and "muddy ale" that made men impotent. Coffee, in fact, was the Viagra of the day, making "the erection more vigorous, the ejaculation more full,

add[ing] a spiritual ascendancy to the sperm”.

There were no more *Women's Petitions* after that but the coffeehouses found themselves in more dangerous waters when Charles II, a longtime critic, tried to torpedo them by royal proclamation in 1675. Traditionally, informed political debate had been the preserve of the social elite. But in the coffeehouse it was anyone's business — that is, anyone who could afford the measly one-penny entrance fee. For the poor and those living on subsistence wages, they were out of reach. But they were affordable for anyone with surplus wealth — the 35 to 40 per cent of London's 287,500-strong male population who qualified as 'middle class' in 1700 — and sometimes reckless or extravagant spenders further down the social pyramid. Charles suspected the coffeehouses were hotbeds of sedition and scandal but in the face of widespread opposition — articulated most forcefully in the coffeehouses themselves — the King was forced to cave in and recognise that as much as he disliked them, coffeehouses were now an intrinsic feature of urban life.



A map of Exchange Alley after it was razed to the ground in 1748, showing the sites of some of London's most famous coffeehouses including Garraway's and Jonathan's — Source.

By the dawn of the eighteenth century, contemporaries were counting between 1,000 and 8,000 coffeehouses in the capital even if a street survey conducted in 1734 (which excluded unlicensed premises) counted only 551. Even so, Europe had never seen anything like it. Protestant Amsterdam, a rival hub of international trade, could only muster 32 coffeehouses by 1700 and the cluster of coffeehouses in St Mark's Square in Venice were forbidden from seating more than five customers (presumably to stifle the coalescence of public opinion) whereas North's, in Cheapside, could happily seat 90 people.

The character of a coffeehouse was influenced by its location within the hotchpotch of villages, cities, squares, and suburbs that comprised eighteenth-century London, which in turn determined the type of person you'd meet inside. "Some coffee-houses are a resort for learned scholars and for wits," wrote César de Saussure, "others are the resort of dandies or of politicians, or again of professional newsmongers; and many others are temples of

Venus." Flick through any of the old coffeehouse histories in the public domain and you'll soon get a flavour of the kaleidoscopic diversity of London's early coffeehouses.

The walls of Don Saltero's Chelsea coffeehouse were festooned with taxidermy monsters including crocodiles, turtles and rattlesnakes, which local gentlemen scientists like Sir Isaac Newton and Sir Hans Sloane liked to discuss over coffee; at White's on St James's Street, famously depicted by Hogarth, rakes would gamble away entire estates and place bets on how long customers had to live, a practice that would eventually grow into the life insurance industry; at Lunt's in Clerkenwell Green, patrons could sip coffee, have a haircut and enjoy a fiery lecture on the abolition of slavery given by its barber-proprietor John Gale Jones; at John Hogarth's Latin Coffeehouse, also in Clerkenwell, patrons were encouraged to converse in the Latin tongue at all times (it didn't last long); at Moll King's brothel-coffeehouse, depicted by Hogarth, libertines could sober up and peruse a directory of harlots, before being led to the

requisite brothel nearby. There was even a floating coffeehouse, the Folly of the Thames, moored outside Somerset House where fops and rakes danced the night away on her rain-spattered deck.



Hogarth's depiction of Moll and Tom King's coffee-shack from *The Four Times of Day* (1736). Though it is early morning, the night has only just begun for the drunken rakes and prostitutes spilling out of the coffeehouse – Source .



A small body-colour drawing of the interior of a London coffeehouse from c. 1705. Everything about this oozes warmth and welcome from the bubbling coffee cauldron right down to the flickering candles and kind eyes of the coffee drinkers – Source .

Looking at the cartoonish image, decorated in the same innocent style as contemporary decorated fans, it's hard to reconcile it with Voltaire's rebuke of a City coffeehouse in the 1720s as "dirty, ill-furnished, ill-served, and ill-lighted" nor particularly *London Spy* author Ned Ward's (admittedly scurrilous) evocation of a soot-coated den of iniquity with jagged floorboards and papered-over windows populated by "a parcel of muddling muck-worms... some going, some coming, some scribbling, some talking, some drinking, others jangling, and the whole room stinking of tobacco." But, the establishments in the West End and Exchange Alley excepted, coffeehouses were generally spartan, wooden and no-nonsense.

As the image shows, customers sat around long communal tables strewn with every type of media imaginable listening in to each other's conversations, interjecting whenever they pleased, and reflecting upon the newspapers. Talking to strangers, an alien concept in most coffee shops today, was actively encouraged. Dudley Ryder, a young law student from Hackney and shameless social climber, kept a diary in 1715-16, in which he routinely recalled marching into a coffeehouse, sitting down next to a stranger, and discussing the latest news. Private boxes and booths did begin to appear from the late 1740s but before that it was nigh-on impossible to hold a genuinely private conversation in a coffeehouse (and still pretty tricky

afterwards, as attested to by the later coffeehouse print below). To the left, we see a little Cupid-like boy in a flowing periwig pouring a dish of coffee *à la mode* — that is, from a great height — which would fuel some coffeehouse discussion or other.

Much of the conversation centred upon news:

There's nothing done in all the world
From Monarch to the Mouse,
But every day or night 'tis hurled
Into the Coffee-House

chirped a pamphlet from 1672. As each new customer went in, they'd be assailed by cries of "What news have you?" or more formally, "Your servant, sir, what news from Tripoli?" or, if you were in the Latin Coffeehouse, "Quid Novi!" That coffeehouses functioned as post-boxes for many customers reinforced this news-gathering function. Unexpectedly wide-ranging discussions could be twined from a single conversational thread as when, at John's coffeehouse in 1715, news about the execution of a rebel Jacobite Lord (as recorded by Dudley Ryder) transmogrified into a discourse on "the ease of death by beheading" with one participant telling of an experiment he'd conducted slicing a viper in two and watching in amazement as both ends slithered off in different directions. Was this, as some of the company conjectured, proof of the existence of two consciousnesses?



A Mad Dog in a Coffeehouse by the English caricaturist Thomas Rowlandson, c. 1800. Note the reference to Cerberus on the notice on the wall and the absence of long communal tables by the later 18th century — Source .

If the vast corpus of 17th-century pamphlet literature is anything to go by then early coffeehouses were socially inclusive spaces where lords sat cheek-by-jowl with fishmongers and where butchers trumped baronets in philosophical debates. "Pre-eminence of place none here should mind," proclaimed the *Rules and Orders of the Coffee-House* (1674), "but take the next fit seat he can find" — which would seem to chime with John Macky's description of noblemen and "private gentlemen" mingling together in the Covent Garden coffeehouses "and talking with the same Freedom, as if they had left their Quality and Degrees of Distance at Home."

Perhaps. But propagandist apologies and wondrous claims of travel-writers aside, more compelling evidence suggests that far from co-existing in perfect harmony on the fireside bench, people in coffeehouses sat in relentless judgement of one another. At the Bedford Coffeehouse in Covent Garden hung a "theatrical thermometer" with temperatures ranging from "excellent" to "execrable", registering the company's verdicts on the latest plays and performances, tormenting playwrights and actors on a weekly basis; at Waghorn's and the Parliament Coffee House in Westminster, politicians were shamed for making tedious or

ineffectual speeches and at the Grecian, scientists were judged for the experiments they performed (including, on one occasion, dissecting a dolphin). If some of these verdicts were grounded in rational judgement, others were forged in naked class prejudice. Visiting Young Slaughter's coffeehouse in 1767, rake William Hickey was horrified by the presence of "half a dozen respectable old men", pronouncing them "a set of stupid, formal, ancient prigs, horrid periwig bores, every way unfit to herd with such bloods as us".

But the coffeehouse's formula of maximised sociability, critical judgement, and relative sobriety proved a catalyst for creativity and innovation. Coffeehouses encouraged political debate, which paved the way for the expansion of the electorate in the 19th century. The City coffeehouses spawned capitalist innovations that shaped the modern world. Other coffeehouses sparked journalistic innovation. Nowhere was this more apparent than at Button's coffeehouse, a stone's throw from Covent Garden piazza on Russell Street.



The figure in the cloak is Count Viviani; of the figures facing the reader the draughts player is Dr Arbuthnot, and the figure standing is assumed to be Pope – Source .

It was opened in 1712 by the essayist and playwright Joseph Addison, partly as a refuge from his quarrelsome marriage, but it soon grew into a forum for literary debate where the stars of literary London — Addison, Steele, Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot and others — would assemble each evening, casting their superb literary judgements on new plays, poems, novels, and manuscripts, making and breaking literary reputations in the process. Planted on the western side of the coffeehouse was a marble lion's head with a gaping mouth, razor-sharp jaws, and "whiskers admired by all that see them". Probably the world's most surreal medium of literary communication, he was a

playful British slant on a chilling Venetian tradition.

As Addison explained in the *Guardian*, several marble lions "with mouths gaping in a most enormous manner" defended the doge's palace in Venice. But whereas those lions swallowed accusations of treason that "cut off heads, hang, draw, and quarter, or end in the ruin of the person who becomes his prey", Mr Addison's was as harmless as a pussycat and a servant of the public. The public was invited to feed him with letters, limericks, and stories. The very best of the lion's digest was published in a special weekly edition of the original *Guardian*, then a single-sheet journal costing one-and-a-half pence, edited inside the coffeehouse by Addison. When the lion "roared so loud as to be heard all over the British nation" via the *Guardian*, writing by unknown authors was beamed far beyond the confines of Button's making the public — rather than a narrow clique of wits — the ultimate arbiters of literary merit. Public responses were sometimes posted back to the lion in a loop of feedback and amplification, mimicking the function of blogs and newspaper websites today (but much more civil).

If you're thinking of visiting Button's today, brace yourself: it's a Starbucks, one of over 300



"An excellent piece of workmanship, designed by a great hand in imitation of the antique Egyptian lion, the face of it being compounded out of a lion and a wizard." — Joseph Addison, *the Guardian*, 9 July 1713 – Source.

clones across the city. The lion has been replaced by the "Starbucks community notice board" and there is no trace of the literary, convivial atmosphere of Button's. Addison would be appalled.

Dr Matthew Green graduated from Oxford University in 2011 with a PhD in the impact of the mass media in 18th-century London. He works as a writer, broadcaster, freelance journalist, and lecturer. He is the co-founder of Unreal City Audio, which produces immersive, critically-acclaimed tours of London as live events and audio downloads. His limited edition hand-sewn pamphlet, *The Lost World of the London Coffeehouse*, published by Idler Books, is on sale now: <http://unrealcityaudio.co.uk/shop/>

Unreal City Audio Tours – Join actors, musicians, and Dr Matthew Green for an immersive whirlwind tour of London's original coffeehouses every month. Featuring free shots of 17th-century style coffee! See website for details. Or download an epic two-hour coffeehouse audio tour, vividly reconstructing the lost acoustic world of 17th and 18th-century London and featuring performances by 13 actors, Dr Matthew Green's narration, and broadside ballads all woven into a cinematic soundscape – <http://unrealcityaudio.co.uk/>

Links to Works

- *A Foreign View of England in the Reigns of George I and II* (1902 edition) by César de Saussure.
- *Selections from the Tatler, Spectator and Guardian* (1885) by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.
- *Inns and Taverns of Old London* (1909) by Henry Shelley.
- *Club Life of London* vol 2 (1866) by John Timbs.
- *The Early History of Coffee Houses in England* (1893) by Edward Robinson.
- *All About Coffee* (1922) by William Ukers
 - Internet Archive
 - Project Gutenberg
- *A Journey through England: In familiar letters from a gentleman here, to his friend abroad* (1722) by John Macky.
- *The London Spy* (1701) by Ned Ward.

Recommended Readings

- *The Diary of Dudley Ryder* (1939) edited by William Matthews.
- *The Penny Universities: A History of the Coffee-houses* (1956) by Aytoun Ellis.
- *London: A Social History* (1996) by Roy Porter.
- *The Coffeehouse: A Social History* (2004) by Markman Ellis.

- *London's Coffee Houses: The Stimulating Story* (2003) by Antony Clayton.
- *The Lost World of the London Coffeehouse* (2013) by Matthew Green.

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Michael Erard takes a look at *The Life of Cardinal Mezzofanti*, a book exploring the extraordinary talent of the 19th century Italian cardinal who was reported to be able to speak over seventy languages.



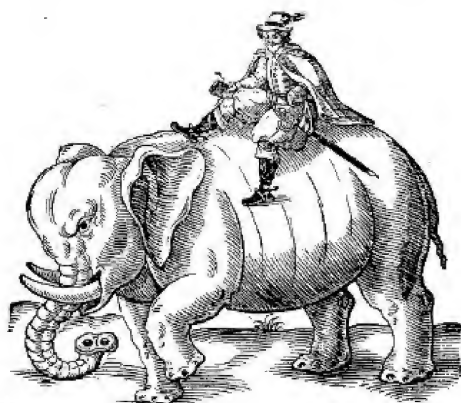
Mezzofanti as pictured in the frontispiece to *The Life of Cardinal Mezzofanti*; with an introductory memoir of eminent linguists, ancient and modern (1858) by Charles William Russell.

Without a doubt, the most important book in English devoted to Cardinal Giuseppe Mezzofanti (1774-1849), the polyglot of Bologna, is *The Life of Cardinal Mezzofanti*, written by an Irish priest, Charles William Russell, and published in 1858. When I first began research on hyperpolyglots, I knew I was going to have to spend considerable time with Russell's book, which contains a wealth of information about Mezzofanti, his time, and his language abilities, not to mention other famous language learners. I had discovered the book by chance in the collection of the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin. The only way to get the required time to hunt through its treasures was to get some sort of research funding, I thought. Soon I discovered that the book, because it is in the public domain, had been scanned and republished in hardcopy, and was also available for free online.

Before I say something about what makes Russell's book so valuable for the hyperpolyglot hunter, let me say a bit about what a "hyperpolyglot" is. A hyperpolyglot is someone who knows six or more languages, according to Richard Hudson, a linguist at University College London. Some have criticized the word as an ugly string of syllables – the word "polyglot" trips off no tongues – but it's useful for distinguishing ordinary multilingualism from the massive accumulation and use of languages that Mezzofanti and others displayed. For a long time, the hyperpolyglot was a sort of language learner whom many people had anecdotes about but who had never been investigated seriously. Is hyperpolyglottery a new kind of multilingualism, feeding off a globalized world of cheap communications? Is it a personal eccentricity, this passion or obsession for languages? Is it driven by a certain type of brain that remembers well, loves patterns, and finds pleasure in repetition? It's all these things, to varying degrees, but to get my hands around the phenomenon, I was going to have to hunt for hyperpolyglots and start with Mezzofanti.

Russell begins by devoting nearly a quarter of the book to describing a menagerie of polyglot scholars, monarchs, missionaries, explorers, and warriors who knew many languages. That's the "introductory memoir of eminent linguists, ancient and modern," of the book's subtitle. Methodically Russell lists them by region or nation. Most came from European countries, though Mithridates makes an appearance. Most are also men, though he devotes a section to women, including a Russian Princess Dashkoff, Cleopatra, and someone named Elizabeth Smith, who had taught herself French, Italian, Greek, Latin, Spanish, German, and Hebrew. Part of the chapter discusses infant prodigies and unschooled polyglots, such as the British

traveler Tom Coryat (1577-1617), who walked all over Europe and Eastern Mediterranean countries, accumulating Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Hindustani, and probably a dozen other languages he had no use for at home. He walked two thousand miles in the same pair of shoes, which he hung on the wall at his hometown church as an offering.



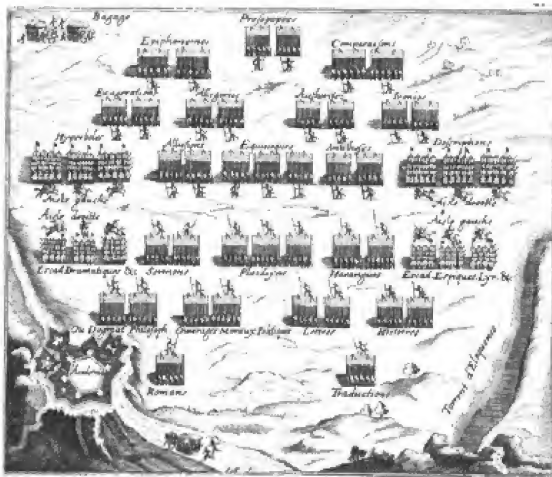
The polyglot and traveler Thomas Coryat as pictured in the frontispiece to his Thomas Coriate, Traueller For the English Wits (1616).

Russell's book is full of singular details like this, or the one in his capsule portrait of the American, Elihu Burritt (1810-1879), who "rose early in the winter mornings, and, while the mistress of the house was preparing breakfast by lamplight, he would stand by the mantel-piece with his Hebrew Bible on the shelf, and his lexicon in his hand, thus studying while he ate." Dropping in mundane details don't humanize as much they amplify the miraculous nature of the personage. It's a stylistic trope from the hagiography that Russell borrowed.

In the same way, he sets Mezzofanti's monumentalism against the gifts of all those lesser saints. "Cardinal Mezzofanti will be found to stand so immeasurably above even the highest of these names,...that, at least for the purposes of comparison with him, its minor celebrities can possess little claim for consideration," he wrote. Over and over, he states that his goal is to assess the claims made for Mezzofanti's language abilities and to measure, once and for all, the cardinal's abilities. He resists the urge to recount anecdotes about him (though a few are too good to resist, such as the time that Lord Byron and Mezzofanti had a swearing match; after Byron's stock was exhausted, Mezzofanti asked, "Is that all?"), opting instead to collate first-hand reports from native speakers who witnessed Mezzofanti using languages. It's as if Russell wanted to singlehandedly rescue him from the cabinet of curiosities where he had been abandoned by science. (Even though Mezzofanti lived at the height of phrenology in Europe, his skull was apparently never an object of fascination, not while he was alive, anyway.) Russell scours the literature and solicits accounts from Mezzofanti's contemporaries. Collecting them, he concludes that Mezzofanti spoke 72 languages to varying degrees.

Russell's biography is also important as a counterpoint to three shorter, sharper papers delivered by Thomas Watts, who was said to know 50 languages himself, before London's Philological Society in 1852, 1854, and 1860. His 1852 paper was the first time various accounts of Mezzofanti had been collected in English, the earliest from 1806. Over the next decade or so, Russell and Watts wrote about the other's work with alternating praise and exasperation. While Russell's biography "is not a blind and unreasoning admiration," Watts writes, it "may still be suspected of being drawn with too courtly a pencil." He then proceeds to take Russell to task for over-counting Mezzofanti's languages, which he puts at "60 or 61." Later Russell agreed with that figure, if one subtracted languages in which Mezzofanti had only a basic knowledge of the grammar and some vocabulary.

Unlike Watts, Russell had met Mezzofanti in Rome several times, the first time in 1841. At 67 years old, the cardinal was not feeble though diminutive, his shoulders slightly rounded; he



'Allegory of Grammar and Style' from Antoine Furetière's *Nouvelle Allegorique, Ou Histoire Des Derniers Troubles Arrivez Au Royaume D'Eloquence* Daatum (1659)

had a full head of “almost luxuriant” gray hair. One day after a meeting in the Vatican, Russell heard Mezzofanti converse, “with every appearance of fluency and ease,” in seven languages: Romaic, Greek, German, Hungarian, French, Spanish, and English. Two years later, on another trip, he witnessed Mezzofanti’s performance at the annual gathering of students from all over the world at the Propaganda of the Faith. They got up and recited poems in 42 languages, many of which had apparently been looked at by Mezzofanti. (In the Mezzofanti archives in the Archiginnasio Public Library in Bologna, I found a great number of these poems written in Mezzofanti’s hand.) But the real performance came after, when students gathered around him and engaged him in their languages.

Mobbed Mezzofanti spoke this language, then that, Chinese, Peguan, Russian, and others, “hardly ever hesitating, or ever confounding a word or interchanging a construction,” in a “linguistic fusilade.” Russell added, “I cannot, at this distance of time, say what was the exact number of the group which stood around him, nor can I assert that they all spoke different languages; but making every deduction, the number of speakers cannot have been less than ten or twelve; and I do not think that he once hesitated for a sentence or even for a word!” One hundred and fifty years later, the modern hyperpolyglot hunter has more tools for understanding Mezzofanti’s abilities than either Russell or Watts did. Yet we’re not much further than they were in focusing on a number of languages as the most salient way to characterize these sorts of language talents. Digging into the neurological questions – what sorts of brains do these people have, and are they different from other brains, and if so, how – it’s important to stay connected to the subjective experience of being someone like Mezzofanti. He wrote little about himself, but this poem, in English, which I found in the Archiginnasio, suggests that the modesty attributed to him (even as cardinal, he didn’t allow anyone to kiss his ring, as is customary) was not just another performance, and that the man himself wished to be on the periphery, not the center of attention.

Why do you ask my name? Why will you have it here
Where many names appear illustrious, known to Fame. But since you are so kind, I write it, and remind = what
World offers is vain Oh let us Heaven gain!

Author and linguist Michael Erard is the author of *Babel No More: The Search for the World’s Most Extraordinary Language Learners*. Website: <http://www.babelnomore.com>.

Links to Works

- *The Life of Cardinal Mezzofanti; with an introductory memoir of eminent linguists, ancient and modern* (1858) by Charles William Russell
- Internet Archive link

- “On the extraordinary powers of Cardinal Mezzofanti as a linguist” (1852) by Thomas Watts in the *Proceedings of the Philological Society* v.1-6, 1842/43-1852/53.
- Internet Archive link

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The Northern Campaign

For most of 1776, outmatched American troops engaged the British in brief battles and quickly retreated, enduring many defeats and celebrating a few small successes. Nevertheless, the British failed to crush the rebellion.

In 1777, the British planned a three-pronged attack to divide and conquer the northern colonies once and for all. One force of British regulars, Iroquois allies, and loyalist militia (colonists who remained loyal to Britain) would march south from Canada toward Albany. A second army would push north from British-occupied New York City to meet them. A diversionary force would invade western New York.

But in August, the western invasion was repulsed at Fort Stanwix. In September, British troops in Manhattan were sent south to Philadelphia. And in October, Continental troops—reinforced with large numbers of local militia and Indian allies—stopped the British advance at Saratoga.

At the outset of the war, the six Iroquois nations pledged their neutrality: “We are unwilling to join on either side of such a contest,” declared the Oneida in 1775, “for we love you both—old England and new.” But shortly afterward, the Oneida and Tuscarora sided with the patriots; the Mohawk and most other Indians sided with Britain.

At least 1,000 British coalition forces were killed in two days of horrific fighting at Saratoga; nearly 5,000 surrendered and most were held as prisoners of war until 1783.

Following the stunning American victory at Saratoga, France openly declared its support and recognized American independence. Holland, Spain, and France provided gold, arms, gunpowder, uniforms, and medicine, as well as cattle and horses. Their troops and warships challenged Britain worldwide, transforming the war for American independence into a war that Britain could not win.

War in the South

British operations in the South were initially successful. In 1778, British troops captured Savannah, Georgia, and moved inland, taking “a stripe and a star from the rebel flag of Congress.” In 1780 they captured Charleston, South Carolina, taking 6,000 prisoners. But when British forces attempted to move beyond the coast, their progress was slowed by repeated clashes with Continental troops and local partisan militias.

Partisans knew the swamps, savannahs, and pine forests of South Carolina and Georgia. They fought from tree to tree and advanced under cover. Some had deadly accurate, long-range rifled muskets. They used hit-and-run ambushes and ruthless, take-no-prisoners combat, not the close-order volleys and bayonet charges of open-field linear warfare favored by regular armies. They won few outright victories, but they frustrated British efforts to control the South.

Much of the fighting in Georgia and the Carolinas took place between Americans. Many colonists there—as in all the colonies—remained fiercely loyal to the king. Some were wealthy aristocrats; most were farmers or tradesmen. Some took refuge in British strongholds in Charleston, South Carolina, or fled to Canada, the Caribbean, or England. Many others joined loyalist militia and fought against opposing partisan units comprised of their own neighbors.

War at Sea

The Continental Navy fielded a tiny fleet and a corps of marines. Private vessels hired by Congress to harass enemy troop ships and disrupt commercial shipping, provided the bulk of America's force at sea. With the navy, they sank or captured hundreds of enemy ships and took thousands of prisoners. But only after the alliance—when French and Spanish warships joined the fight—did the tide turn in favor of the Americans. The British suffered losses in the Atlantic, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Mediterranean, and even in their own coastal waters.

Exhibition Graphics

On September 23, 1779, John Paul Jones, commander of the Continental Navy's *Bon Homme Richard*, defeated the royal warship *Serapis*. The *Richard* was badly crippled in the initial close-range exchange of cannon fire, but when the British commander asked if Jones was ready to surrender, Jones cried: "I have not yet begun to fight!"

Victory at Yorktown

In August 1781, General George Washington was monitoring British activity in New York City when he learned that the French fleet was sailing to the Chesapeake Bay. A large British army had retreated from the southern interior, and now occupied Yorktown, Virginia. Washington and Comte de Rochambeau, commander of French forces in America, saw a fleeting opportunity to entrap the enemy. They rushed south.

While the French fleet commanded by Admiral Comte de Grasse blocked the Chesapeake and held the British fleet at bay, American and French troops trapped British forces at Yorktown in the fall of 1781. They bombarded the town relentlessly and, in bold assaults, captured important outlying positions. Fierce British counterattacks proved fruitless. On October 17, the British commander, Lord Charles Cornwallis, accepted a humiliating reality: his position was untenable. He had no choice but to surrender.

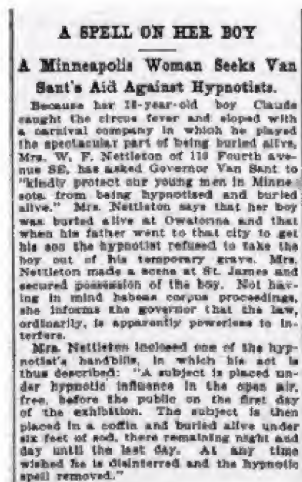
The British surrendered more than 8,000 troops at Yorktown. They remained in control of New York and Charleston, and continued limited fighting in the colonies and abroad for another year. But once news of the surrender reached London, popular support for the war vanished. This disaster, together with other setbacks at home and abroad, led to the downfall of Prime Minister Lord North. Britain opened peace talks with American diplomats in Paris.

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Misc. Tidings of Yore

Forgotten Lore & Historical Curiosities

The Real Threat is the Hypnotist?

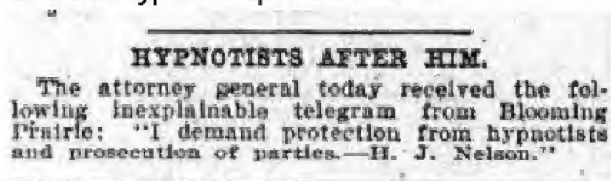


A SPELL ON HER BOY

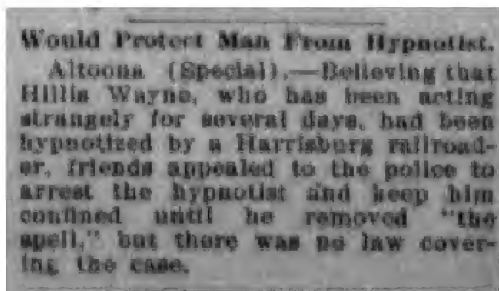
A Minneapolis Woman Seeks Van Sant's Aid Against Hypnotists

Because her 18-year-old boy Claude caught the circus fever and eloped with a carnival company in which he played the spectacular part of being buried alive, Mrs. W.F. Nettleton of 110 Fourth avenue SE has asked Governor Van Sant to 'kindly protect our young men in Minnesota from being hypnotized and buried alive.' Mrs. Nettleton says that her boy was buried alive at Owatonna and that when his father went to that city to get his son the hypnotist refused to take the boy out of his temporary grave. Mrs. Nettleton made a scene at St. James and secured possession of the boy. Not having in mind habeas corpus proceedings, she informs the governor that the law, ordinarily, is apparently powerless to interfere.

Mrs. Nettleton inclosed one of the hypnotist's handbills, in which his act is thus described: 'A subject is placed under hypnotic influence in the open air, free, before the public on the first day of the exhibition. The subject is then placed in a coffin and buried alive under six feet of sod, there remaining night and day until the last day. At any time wished he is disinterred and the hypnotic spell removed.'



influence the mind in the early 1900s. In 1905 an H.J. Nelson from Blooming Prairie, Minnesota sent a telegram to the attorney general's office insisting that steps be taken to protect people (or himself) from hypnotists and that hypnotists be criminally prosecuted.

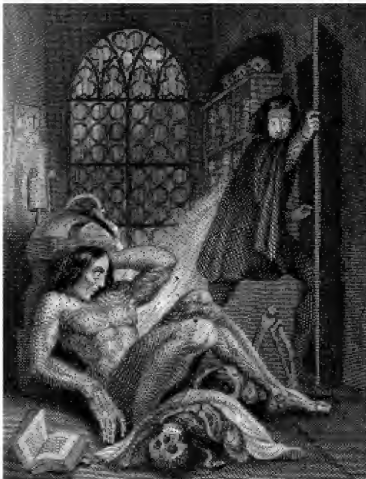


Friends of Hillis Wayne noticed that his behavior had been a little "off" for a few days and attributed this to him being under the spell of a railroader. An appeal to the police was made requesting that they hypnotist be jailed until he removed Hillis' spell, but apparently hypnotizing someone wasn't against the law.

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Professor Sharon Ruston surveys the scientific background to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, considering contemporary investigations into resuscitation, galvanism, and the possibility of states between life and death.



Frankenstein observing the first stirrings of his creature. Engraving by W. Chevalier after Th. von Holst, 1831. Featured as frontispiece to the 1831 edition of Shelley's novel
Source: Wellcome Library.

Far from the fantastic and improbable tale that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* now seems to us, the novel was declared by one reviewer upon publication to have "an air of reality attached to it, by being connected with the favourite projects and passions of the times".¹ Among these were the scientific investigations into the states of life and death. Considerable uncertainty surrounded these categories. So much so that it was not far-fetched that Frankenstein should assert: "Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds" (ch. 4). He was not alone in considering that the boundary between life and death was imaginary and that it might be breached.

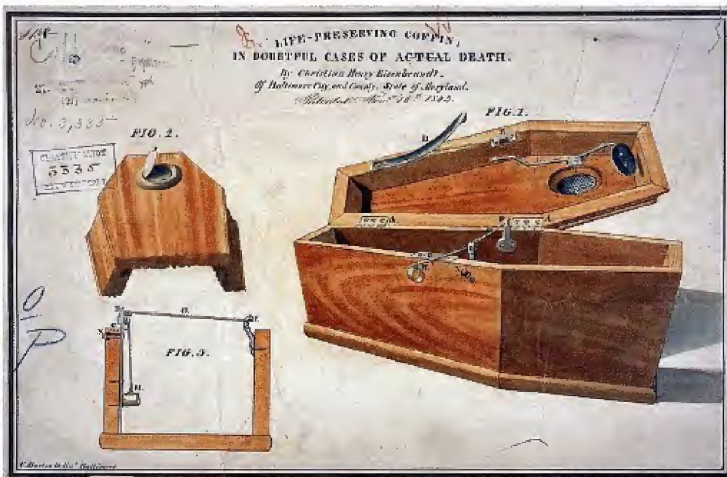
Worried by the potential inability to distinguish between the states of life and death, two doctors, William Hawes and Thomas Cogan, set up the Royal Humane Society in London in 1774. It was initially called the "Society for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned"; its aims were to publish information to help people resuscitate others, and it paid for attempts to save lives (the Society paid more money if the attempt was successful). Many people could not swim at this time despite the fact that they worked and lived along London's rivers and canals. There was an annual procession of those "raised from the dead" by the Society's methods, which may well have included people who had intended suicide too. One such seems to have been Mary Shelley's mother, the feminist, Mary Wollstonecraft, who after leaping from Putney Bridge into the Thames in the depth of depression complained "I have only to lament, that, when the bitterness of death was past, I was inhumanly brought back to life and misery". The pun on her "inhumane" treatment may well refer to the efforts of the Humane Society in rescuing her.² The spectacular tales of apparent resurrections from the dead by the Society fed the public's concern that it was impossible to be sure whether a person was truly dead and, consequently, fears of being buried alive grew.

There was a scientific basis for the public's anxieties. The French *Encyclopédie* distinguished between two kinds of death, "incomplete" and "absolute": "That there is no remedy for death is an axiom widely admitted; we, however, are willing to affirm that death can be cured".³ In London, James Curry, a physician at Guy's hospital and one of the Shelleys' doctors in 1817, wrote a book that gave information on how to identify what he called "absolute" from "apparent" death.⁴ In the book he argued that the putrefaction of the body was the only way to be completely sure that a person was dead. There was interest in states of so-called "suspended animation", such as fainting, coma, and sleeping. Mary Shelley followed



A watercolour by Robert Smirke depicting a man being brought in by boat apparently drowned, his wife and family grieving on the shore. A later engraving of this scene by Robert Pollard was dedicated to the Royal Humane Society in 1787 — Source: Wellcome Library.

contemporary scientific language when she described episodes of fainting within the novel. When Victor Frankenstein creates the creature, he collapses because of a nervous illness and describes himself in this state as “lifeless”. In this instance it is Clerval who “restored” him to “life” (ch. 5). Elizabeth faints on seeing the corpse of William: “She fainted, and was restored with extreme difficulty. When she again lived, it was only to weep and sigh” (ch. 7). The language here is of a life lost and restored; while Elizabeth is unconscious, she is described as being dead.



Design from 1843 for a “life-preserving coffin” — complete with breathing holes and easy to open lid — to be used in the case of the doubtful dead — Source.

There were serious attempts, too, to reanimate the truly dead. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, the Italian physician Luigi Galvani found that frog’s legs twitched as if alive when struck by a spark of electricity. In her 1831 Preface to *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley mentions how discussions on this idea that one could electrically stimulate a dead muscle into apparent life — known as “galvanism” — came to influence her story.

Many and long were the conversations between Lord Byron and Shelley, to which I

was a devout but nearly silent listener. During one of these, various philosophical doctrines were discussed, and among others the nature of the principle of life, and whether there was any probability of its ever being discovered and communicated. ... Perhaps a corpse would be re-animated; galvanism had given token of such things: perhaps the component parts of a creature might be manufactured, brought together, and endued with vital warmth.

Night waned upon this talk, and even the witching hour had gone by, before we retired to rest. When I placed my head on my pillow, I did not sleep, nor could I be said to think. My imagination, unbidden, possessed and guided me, gifting the successive images that arose in my mind with a vividness far beyond the usual bounds of reverie. I saw—with shut eyes, but acute mental vision, —I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together. I saw the hideous phantasm of a man stretched out, and then, on the working of

some powerful engine, show signs of life, and stir with an uneasy, half vital motion.

Galvani's nephew, Giovanni Aldini, progressed from frogs legs to attempting the reanimation of hanged criminals, making use of the "Murder Act" of 1752, which added the punishment of dissection to hanging. In 1803, Aldini was able to experiment with some success upon George Forster, who had been found guilty of murdering his wife and child. Onlookers report that Forster's eye opened, his right hand was raised and clenched, and his legs moved.

M. Aldini, who is the nephew of the discoverer of this most interesting science, showed the eminent and superior powers of galvanism to be far beyond any other stimulant in nature. On the first application of the process to the face, the jaws of the deceased criminal began to quiver, and the adjoining muscles were horribly contorted, and one eye was actually opened. In the subsequent part of the process the right hand was raised and clenched, and the legs and thighs were set in motion. Mr Pass, the beadle of the Surgeons' Company, who was officially present during this experiment, was so alarmed that he died of fright soon after his return home.⁵

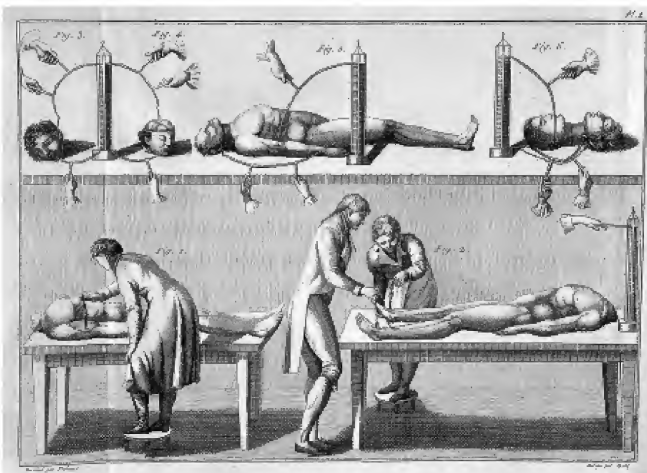


Plate 4 from Aldini's *Essai theorique et experimental sur le galvanisme, avec une serie d'experiences* (1804) – Source: Wellcome Library.

In Mary and Percy Shelleys' tragic personal lives, there is much evidence that they believed the dead could be successfully reanimated. For example, Percy Shelley writes of their child, William Shelley's last illness: "By the skill of the physician he was once reanimated after the process of death had actually commenced, and he lived four days after that time".⁶ Death, it seems, could be reversed.

In the years leading up to Mary Shelley's publication of *Frankenstein* there was a very public debate in the Royal College of Surgeons between two surgeons, John Abernethy and William Lawrence, on the nature of life itself. Both of these surgeons had links with the Shelleys: Percy had read one of Abernethy's books and quoted it in his own work and Lawrence had been the Shelleys' doctor.⁷ In this debate, questions were asked about how to define life, and how living bodies were different to dead or inorganic bodies. Abernethy argued that life did not depend upon the body's structure, the way it was organised or arranged, but existed separately as a

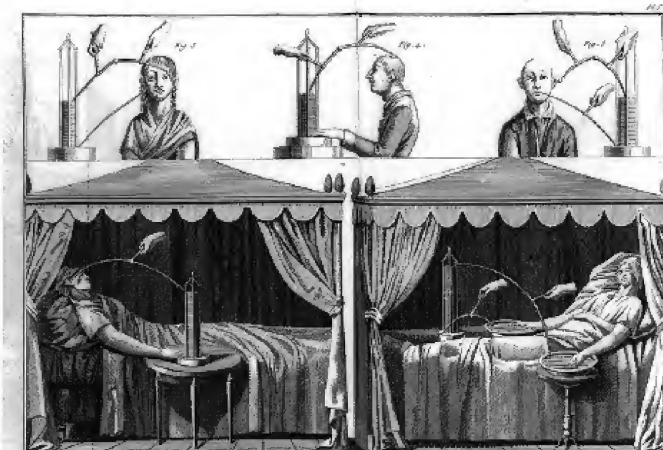


Plate 5 from Aldini's *Essai theorique et experimental sur le galvanisme, avec une serie d'experiences* (1804) – Source: Wellcome Library.

material substance, a kind of vital principle, “superadded” to the body. His opponent, Lawrence, thought this a

ridiculous idea and instead understood life as simply the working operation of all the body's functions, the sum of its parts. Lawrence's ideas were seen as being too radical: they seemed to suggest that the soul, which was often seen as being akin to the vital principle, did not exist either. Lawrence was forced to withdraw the book in which he had published his lectures and resign the hospital post he held, though he was reinstated after publicly denouncing the views he had put forward. The episode showed just how controversial the categories of life and dead had become and provided further inspiration for Mary Shelley's novel.

Professor Sharon Ruston is Chair in Romanticism at Lancaster University. She has published *Creating Romanticism* (2013), *Shelley and Vitality* (2005), *Romanticism: An Introduction* (2007), and has edited *Literature and Science* (2008) and co-edited with David Higgins *Teaching Romanticism* (2010). She is currently co-editing the Collected Letters of Sir Humphry Davy.

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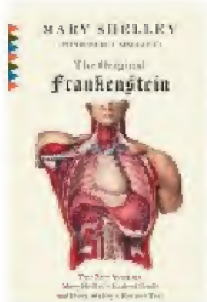
1. Anonymous, “Review of *Frankenstein*”, *Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany*, 2 (1818), 249–53 (p. 249).
2. See Carolyn Williams, “‘Inhumanly Brought Back to Life and Misery’: Mary Wollstonecraft, *Frankenstein*, and the Royal Humane Society”, *Women's Writing*, 8.2 (2001), 213–34.
3. Quoted in Daniel Arasse, *The Guillotine and the Terror*, trans. by Christopher Miller (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989), p. 37.
4. James Curry, *Observations on Apparent Death from Drowning, Hanging, Suffocation by Noxious Vapours, Fainting-Fits, Intoxication, Lightning, Exposure to Cold, &c., &c. and an account of the proper means to be employed for recovery [...]*, 2nd edn (London: E. Cox and Son, 1815), ch. 1.
5. Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin, *The Newgate Calendar*, 4 vols. (London: J. Robbins and Co, 1825), iii, 317–318.
6. *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by F. L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), ii, 104, 25 July 1819.
7. See Sharon Ruston, *Shelley and Vitality* (Basingtoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

Public Domain Works

- *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* (1831 edition), by Mary Shelley.
 - Internet Archive
 - Romantic Circles
- *The Danger of Premature Internment* (1816), by Joseph Taylor.

- The Public Domain Review
 - Internet Archive
- *De viribus electricitatis in motu musculari commentarius* (1792), by Luigi Galvani.
 - Internet Archive
- *Experiments and observations relative to the influence lately discovered by M. Galvani, and commonly called animal electricity* (1793), by Richard Fowler.
 - Internet Archive
- *An account of the late improvements in galvanism* (1803), by Giovanni Aldini.
 - The Public Domain Review
 - Internet Archive

Further Reading



The Original Frankenstein (Vintage, 2009)

by Mary Shelley, edited by Charles E. Robinson

For the first time we can read Mary Shelley's first draft of this classic story side by side with the later, more well-known version involving Percy Shelley's amendments and contributions. The result is a fascinating new view on one of literature's greatest works.

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The story of four Thanksgiving ingredients

By Jessica Carbone and Meg Salocks, November 23, 2015

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The story of four Thanksgiving ingredients

Thanksgiving meals have come a long way since the first shared feast back at Plymouth Colony in 1621. While our reasons for gathering today may have changed dramatically since that first harvest celebration, there is still a familiar cast of ingredients that make up the what is now traditional the Thanksgiving meal: turkey, corn, squash, and cranberries. As we have been exploring at our weekly cooking demonstrations, Food Fridays, those ingredients didn't come out of nowhere—they reflect specific changes in how we've grown, cooked, and eaten food in America.



Thanksgiving menu, 1968. Civilian Conservation Corps.

So how did these iconic ingredients make their way onto the Thanksgiving menu? Join us for a quick peek inside the stories behind these four Thanksgiving foods to whet your appetite and your mind as you prepare for your own feast.

Squash

- Squash was first domesticated in Central America and quickly

became one of three primary crops of the American Indian diet in the Northeast region of present-day United States. (Pumpkins would have been featured among the earliest Northeast squashes, though not all squashes grown were pumpkins.)

- Squash and pumpkin seeds then made their way to Europe, thanks to colonists from the nobility classes who liked featuring foods from the New World in their Old World kitchen gardens.

- Traditional American Indian methods for cooking and eating squash included boiling pumpkins

whole or roasting squash in strips over the fire. Colonists often enjoyed pumpkins steamed and then filled with milk or cream to make a custard. They also enjoyed dried pumpkin, especially in a



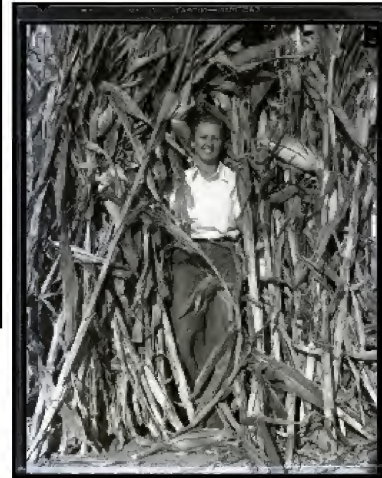
An immature Cinderella pumpkin from the museum's Victory Garden. When the rind is young it has a yellowish color, maturing to orange, and aging to an orange red.



Family harvesting pumpkins, 1975. Photograph by Lisa Law.

popular cocktail called a "flip," which included sugar, molasses, strong beer, and rum.

Corn



Woman posing in cornfield, undated.
Underwood & Underwood Glass
Stereograph Collection, 1895-1921.

- Corn, like squash, has its origins in Central America, where it was a staple crop for the Aztecs and Mayans. Corn grew northward from southern Mexico up through the area now known as Texas and then was carried beyond to regions like New England by American Indians who found it easy to grow and versatile to prepare.

- Corn was part of

the Iroquois "Three Sisters" tradition for growing, along with beans and squash. Planted together, these crops gave each other structural support, helped fertilize the soil, and, when eaten, provided a nutritious balance of carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats, and vitamins.

- During the Revolutionary war, many colonists chose to use cornmeal instead of wheat-based flour, to demonstrate greater culinary and economic independence from the British.
- Today corn is used in many products. It can be refined for use as an artificial sweetener, milled into animal feed, made into plastics and building materials, and even made into biofuel.

Cranberries



Cranberry shipping crate from the Grayland Cranberry Growers Association.

- There are several theories to how "cranberry" got its names and, according to Plimoth Plantation food historian Kathleen Wall, there are several other English names for the berry: Fen-berries, Fen-grapes; Marish-Berries, Marish-worts, Marish – whortleberries; Mosse-berries, or Moore-berries.

- The Wampanoag brought venison and may have brought cranberries to the first harvest celebration, as cranberries were native to the region. But a cranberry sauce like those we're used to would have required too much

imported sugar to prepare. At that time, cranberries would likely have been eaten in a rough compote, more savory than sweet with just a touch of honey or maple syrup.

- For decades, cranberries were too delicate to transport long distances and were consumed mostly in New England. But in 1912, Marcus Urann, head of the United Cape Cod Cranberry Co., started packaging and selling canned cranberry sauce. Cranberries in this form could enjoy a

longer shelf life and quickly become a fixture on the Thanksgiving table far away from cranberry bogs.



"A Wild Turkey Hunt," by Rufas Fairchild Zogbaum (1849-1925). Harry T. Peters Lithography Collection.

Turkeys:

- Turkeys were an important source of sustenance among native peoples of Central and South America. The farmed turkey enjoyed most frequently in North America today (*Meleagris gallopavo*) is related to the wild birds found north of the Rio Balsas in Mexico.
- As far as the European adoption of New World ingredients, turkeys were considered one of the greatest and most rapid successes—by 1511 the king of Spain was ordering every returning ship to bring back 10 turkeys. Wealthy European hosts loved impressing their guests with large roasted birds such as swans, cranes, or peacocks, but turkeys surpassed these birds in both flavor and availability.
- Colonists in the early 1600s found wild turkey to be so plentiful that a dozen or more could easily be shot at a time. Unfortunately, they were overhunted in New England by 1670, and became generally rare in the country overall by the end of the 19th century.
- We know that wild fowl was served at the first Thanksgiving but don't know for sure that turkey was on the menu. Their role wasn't set in the public imagination until the mid-1800s, when Sarah Josepha Hale's turkey-centric depiction of the holiday in her novel, *Northwood*, began to be adopted as the day's menu. Hale lobbied President Lincoln to make Thanksgiving a national holiday, and Lincoln eventually did so in 1863 near the end of the Civil War.

We hope this gives you some food for thought as you sit down for Thanksgiving this year. Looking for last minute recipes or a culinary challenge? Check out the pumpkin, corn, cranberry, and fowl recipes from our Food Fridays program for some inspiration.

Jessica Carbone is the host of Food Fridays at the National Museum of American History and works with our curatorial team on all things food history. Check out the upcoming schedule and past recipes for more chances to turn up the heat on food history! Meg Salocks works on jazz and food history programs and recommends you sign up for the museum's food newsletter for more culinary stories and activities.

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The infamous Bunnyman Bridge, in daylight.

Now and then, bits of legend enter the cultural consciousness and get passed off as real history by uninformed or unscrupulous parties. Whether it's stories of Soviet ape soldiers or ancient super weapons, these stories are more fluff than fact. But now and then the opposite happens and something that is laughed off as nothing more than a silly story turns out to be rooted in fact. Ask anyone under the age of twenty out in Fairfax County, Virginia if something lurks in the night under the Bunnyman Bridge, and they will tell you most assuredly that something does. Be he a flesh and blood maniac or a being of a more ghostly variety, the Bunnyman is said to haunt the Colchester Overpass, now better known as Bunnyman Bridge.

Legend of the Bunnyman

The legend began somewhere around 1970, and the information that I have seen claims that it has spawned upwards of fifty-four variants(!). The most common version of the story goes as follows. Around 1904, the residents of Clifton, Virginia successfully petitioned to have the local asylum/prison shut down. Since you can't just release a bunch of violent crazy folks out into the countryside, the prisoners were to be transported to another facility. All went well, at least until the transport crashed, killing several of the prisoners and allowing the rest to escape. All but one of the escapees were rounded up. Skinned, half eaten rabbit carcasses left hanging from trees and the Colchester Overpass began to appear soon after. Officials then found the body of Marcus Wallster, left hanging from the Underpass in a similar manner to the rabbits.

Understandably concerned, the police ramped up their efforts to find the madman and soon discovered that the culprit was none other than Douglas A. Griffin, who had been put in the asylum for killing his family on Easter Sunday. When the climactic confrontation came between the authorities and the madman, Griffin was hit by an oncoming train in an attempt to escape. Ever since, around Halloween when the veil between our world and the spirit world is thin, locals claim to see rabbit carcasses hanging from the Colchester Overpass. Some have even claimed to see a figure standing there in the shadows. Nobody ventures beneath the Underpass to see who it is though because the Bunnyman makes no distinction between rabbits and people—many variants of the legend have our costume-clad friend going Jason Vorhees on curious teenagers who come calling on Halloween Night, leaving their mutilated corpses dangling from the Colchester Overpass like Marcus Wallster so many years before.

The strange truth

Of course, this is all sorts of urban legend-y fun but how much of it is true? Is this story, like Cropsey, more of a way to scare teens and preteens away from danger? As you might suspect, the bulk of this story is false. There never was an insane asylum in Clifton, and county records have no men named Marcus Wallster or Douglas A. Griffin on record as ever having lived.

However, there are some elements of the story which are true. Namely, there really was a crazy guy dressed in a bunny suit terrorizing (actually more like confusing the hell out of) people in Fairfax County. Two separate incidents from 1970 report a man dressed in a bunny suit yelling at people he felt were trespassing on his property. In one incident he tossed a hatchet through a car window, and the other he attempted to chop down a porch post with a long handled axe. No suspect was ever detained, but in one related incident a man calling himself the "Axe-Man" accused a representative of the Kings Park West Subdivision of dumping trash on his property. To this day no one knows the mysterious costumed man's identity.

Not coincidentally, after these events in 1970 the Bunnyman story took wing. It isn't often in researching folklore and urban legends that you find their origin, but in this case it seems that the truth really was stranger than fiction.

8 thoughts on "The Strange True Story Behind the Legend of the Bunnyman Bridge"

1. Pingback: The Phantom Barber of Pascagoula | Oddly Historical
2. Pingback: Delphine LaLaurie — The Murderous Mistress | Oddly Historical
3. Pingback: The Day the Golden Gate Bridge (Allegedly) Almost Collapsed | Oddly Historical
4. **TheAvenger6091** May 28, 2015 at 7:01 pm

This man must be brought to justice, I'll avenge those poor animals for I am The Avenger. I will visit this place, and pay this man a visit.

5. Pingback: Urban GhostsBeware of the Bunny Man, Fairfax County VA's Creepiest Urban Legend - Urban Ghosts
6. Pingback: A Ghoulish Apparition: The Bizarre Legend of Arizona's Red Ghost | Oddly Historical
7. **Karen** November 9, 2015 at 8:02 pm

The bunny man bridge there is some truths there. I went there years ago in the middle of the night and was taking pictures and doing voice recordings. On a full battery my camera was acting up and not working there was a constant banging in the distance. I was asking on the recorder "does anyone here want to say something. Getting back home the pictures I did get were hundred of bright orbs moving up from the ground. The voice recordings revealed a demonic voice saying "No bitch".

1. **Andrew Kincaid** Post authorNovember 15, 2015 at 1:09 pm

Interesting! On this blog I tend to flirt with the paranormal, but generally stick to what is verifiable. However I don't entirely discount such things, personally. So that's why I wrote the post how I did.

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"Two Laughing Men." by Hans von Aachen. Laughter is usually associated with joy, but during the Tanganyika epidemic it was anything but joyful.

Everyone knows that laughter is contagious. Seeing another person laughing can be enough to inspire a fit of giggles (or chuckles, if you prefer) in even the most taciturn person. It doesn't even matter if you're in on the joke or not.

But if laughter is contagious, could it become an epidemic? This seemed to be the case in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) in 1962, when three girls at a mission school began to act odd. The resulting epidemic swept through the entire country and spilled over into neighboring nations. It was characterized, at least in popular memory, by uncontrollable laughter. As we will soon see, the truth is more complex and not nearly as amusing.

Epidemic laughter?

The epidemic began on January 30, 1962 at a mission run boarding school at Kashasha village in Tanzania, 25 miles south of Bukoba. Three girls began to show symptoms that would come to characterize the outbreak: laughing and crying fits, restlessness, and paranoia. Patients would often become violent when restrained. The symptoms lasted for hours or even days, with the longest stretch lasting 16 days. After the initial onset of symptoms, most of the girls showed signs of improvement before lapsing back into an altered state.

By March 18, 95 of the school's 159 students – which were all girls ages 12-18 – were effected, forcing the school to close. The girls were sent home, and they brought the epidemic with them.

The outbreak reached Nshamba village when two boarding school students returned home. The Nshamba outbreak began March 28 and ran until April 30. Of 10,000 village residents, 217 villagers fell ill. All of the victims were school children or young adults. Both sexes were affected.

In May, the Kashasha boarding school attempted to reopen, but the laughing and crying fits struck again. However, this outbreak wasn't as severe as the initial one, with only 57 out of 159 students affected. Still, the school was once again forced to close its doors.

On June 10, the epidemic hit Ramashenye Girl's Middle School, which was located on the outskirts of Bukoba. Some students from Kashasha lived in the area. This outbreak lasted eight days and sickened 98 of 154 students, forcing the school's closure.

While the middle school suffered its outbreak, another student spread the illness to her home village. This outbreak was confined to three of her family members.

From that point, the reports become sketchy. The facts of the incident were not well recorded.

The incident lasted from about six months to a year, and spread through large swaths of Tanganyika and into the neighboring countries of Kenya and Uganda. Thousands fell ill before the outbreak ended as mysteriously as it began.

Exhaustive testing of both food and the school itself showed no presence of pathogens or toxic agents that could explain the odd behavior. Medical tests on the girls themselves revealed no infections or physical ailments. Ruling out any biological causes led experts to turn to the only viable explanation for the odd events: our old pal, mass hysteria.



Tanganyika, more or less how it appeared in the 60s during the epidemic.

Regional stresses and intense pressure

The outbreak occurred against a backdrop of immense change. In 1962, Tanganyika gained its independence from Great Britain. The country, like many others in Africa, had been a colony since the end of the 19th century, when it was claimed by Germany. Then it came under the aegis of the British Commonwealth after World War I.

These stresses no doubt played a part in the larger outbreak. Of more immediate importance to the girls among whom the initial outbreak happened was a stressful environment that reflected the larger changes

in microcosm. These were adolescent girls who left their families and villages, often the only world they'd ever known, to go live with strangers in an unfamiliar setting. They were exposed to strict Western style educational practices and to Christian morality for the first time. These would be much different than the tribal values that the girls grew up with. Like Tanganyika itself, the girls were walking an unfamiliar path in unknown territory, in a state of flux.

In addition, racial segregation in schools was done away with on January 1, 1962. It might seem odd today that this could be stressful, but a simple look at how desegregation of schools in the US caused so much uproar shows how a big change like that can effect people.

Taken together, these factors all built a pressure cooker tailor made to produce mass hysteria.

An outbreak of motor-variant hysteria

The Tanganyika laughing epidemic was an outbreak of motor-variant hysteria. Rare in the modern world, it mostly confines itself to the third world, where belief in the supernatural often still holds sway and people are more likely to be subjected to oppressive circumstances, both political and cultural.

While the Tanganyika outbreak has become entrenched in both popular culture and scientific literature as an epidemic of hilarity, the laughter was only one symptom. The others were

crying, restlessness, and violent behavior. But the focus on the laughing is understandable, since laughter is usually associated with mirth and good times rather than illness. However, laughter can be a symptom in a variety of disorders. People suffering from dementia and other mental illnesses might laugh at inappropriate times, for no apparent reason. Another disease with laughter as a symptom is kuru, a neurodegenerative disease similar to mad cow disease. The end stage of the disease is characterized by fits of laughter.

So, to return to the Tanganyika case, the victims weren't laughing because they found something funny. The laughter was one of several ways that the profound stress and anxiety they could not express in healthier ways was converted into physical symptoms. This laughter was not continuous, as is implied by the term "laughter epidemic." Humans can only laugh for about 20 seconds straight. The act of laughing is, believe it or not, every taxing. It puts a lot of stress on the respiratory system and abdominal muscles.

Anyone who has laughed until their sides ached and they couldn't breathe has experienced just how strenuous laughter can be. Now, imagine experiencing fits of laughter like that day in and day out for months at a time. It is easy to see then how the victims of the Tanganyika laughing epidemic suffered.

Sources:

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Rankin AM, Philip PJ. "An Epidemic of Laughing in the Bukoba District of Tanganyika. *Central African Journal of Medicine*. May 9, 1963; pgs 167-170

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The U.S. Army's "Camel Corps" Experiment

By Vince Hawkins



In June 1859, while attempting to climb a sloping bare rock in southwest Texas, one of the Army's camels lost its footing and fell, smashing one of the precious water barrels it was carrying. An officer accompanying the expedition quickly cut the lines ensnaring the camel, preventing a bad situation from becoming worse. (Camels in Texas, by Thomas Lovell, courtesy of the Abell-Hanger Foundation and the Permian Basin Petroleum Museum, Library and Hall of Fame of Midland, Texas, where the painting is on permanent display.)

In the 1830s America's westward expansion was being severely curtailed by the inhospitable terrain and climate faced by pioneers and settlers. This was particularly the case in the southwest, where arid deserts, mountain peaks and impassable rivers were proving to be an almost insurmountable obstacle to men and animals alike. In 1836, U.S. Army LT George H. Crosman hit upon an unusual idea to deal with the situation. With the able assistance of a friend, E. H. Miller, Crosman made a study of the problem and sent a report on their findings to Washington suggesting that:

"For strength in carrying burdens, for patient endurance of labor, and privation of food, water & rest, and in some respects speed also, the camel and dromedary (as the Arabian camel is

called) are unrivaled among animals. The ordinary loads for camels are from seven to nine hundred pounds each, and with these they can travel from thirty to forty miles a day, for many days in succession. They will go without water, and with but little food, for six or eight days, or it is said even longer. Their feet are alike well suited for traversing grassy or sandy plains, or rough, rocky hills and paths, and they require no shoeing..."

Their report was disregarded by the War Department. It was with this rather simple suggestion, however, that Crosman first introduced the concept for what would later become the most unique experiment in U.S. Army history.



MAJ Henry C. Wayne, an officer in the Quartermaster Department, was one of

The idea lay dormant for several years until 1847 when Crosman, now a major, met MAJ Henry C. Wayne of the Quartermaster Department, another camel enthusiast, who would take up the idea. MAJ Wayne submitted a report to the War Department and Congress recommending the U.S. government's importation of camels. In so doing, he caught the attention of Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, who thought Wayne's suggestions both practical and worthy of attention. Davis, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, tried for several years to acquire approval and funding for the project, but to no avail. It was not until 1853, when Davis was appointed Secretary of War, that he was able to present the idea of importing camels to both President Franklin Pierce and a still skeptical Congress.

In his annual report in 1854, Davis informed Congress that, in the *".... Department of the Pacific the means of transportation have, in some instances, been improved, and it is hoped further developments and improvements will still diminish this large item of our army expenditure. In*

the early advocates for the Army's use of camels. He resigned from the Army on 31 December 1860 and was later commissioned a brigadier general in the Confederate Army. (Library of Congress)

this connexion, ... I again invite attention to the advantages to be anticipated from the use of camels and dromedaries for military and other purposes, and for reasons set forth in my last annual report, recommend that an appropriation be made to introduce a small number of the several varieties of this animal, to test their adaptation to our country..."

On 3 March 1855, Congress agreed and passed the Shield amendment to the appropriation bill, resolving: *"And be it further enacted, that the sum of \$30,000 be, and the same is hereby appropriated under the direction of the War Department in the purchase and importation of camels and dromedaries to be employed for military purposes."* Secretary Davis would finally get his camels.

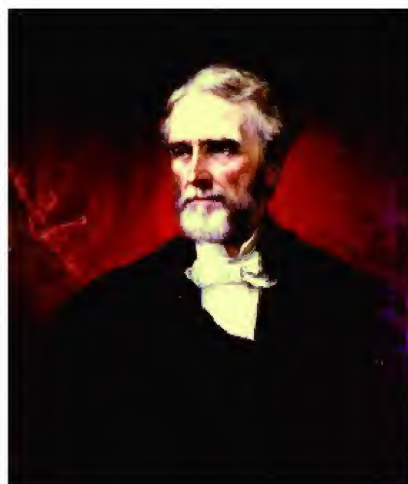
Davis lost no time in getting the experiment underway. In May 1855, he appointed Wayne to head the expedition to acquire the camels. The Navy store ship *USS Supply*, was provided by the Navy to transport the camels to the United States. The *Supply* was under the command of LT David Dixon Porter, who, on being informed of the mission and its cargo, saw to it that she was outfitted with special hatches, stable areas, a "camel car," and hoists and slings to load and transport the animals in relative comfort and safety during their long voyage.



Sailors and an Arab camel herder load a Bactrian camel aboard the USS Supply during one of the two expeditions to procure camels. (National Archives)

When Wayne inspected the *Supply*, he was both amazed and greatly impressed with Porter's meticulous and thorough preparations. It was decided that while Wayne went to London and Paris to visit the zoos and interview military men and scientists with first-hand knowledge and experience in camel handling, Porter would sail the *Supply* to the Mediterranean and deliver supplies to the U.S. naval squadron based there. On 24 July, Wayne joined Porter in Spezzia (La Spezia), Italy and from there they sailed to the Levant, arriving at Goletta (La Goulette) in the Gulf of Tunis on 4 August.

In Goletta, the expedition purchased their first three camels, two of which they later discovered were infected with the "itch," a form of mange. Arriving in Tunis they were joined by Mr. Gwynne Harris Heap, a brother-in-law of Porter's, whose father had been U.S. Consul at Tunis. Heap was familiar with eastern languages and customs and his extensive knowledge of camels proved an invaluable asset to the expedition. During the next five months the expedition sailed across the Mediterranean, stopping at Malta, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. Wayne, Porter, and Heap also made a separate voyage on their own to the Crimea to speak with British officers about their use of camels during the Crimean War. A similar side trip was made to Cairo while the *Supply* was docked at Alexandria.



After numerous difficulties involving a lack of suitable animals and obtaining export permits, the expedition finally acquired through purchase and as gifts a sufficient number of camels. In all, they obtained thirty-three animals: nineteen females and fourteen males. The thirty-three specimens included two Bactrian (two-humped), nineteen dromedaries (one-humped), nineteen Arabian, one Tunis burden, one Arabian calf, and one *Tuill* or *booghdee* camels. The Arabian dromedaries are renowned for their swiftness and the Bactrians for their strength and burden carrying abilities. Thanks to Heap's knowledge of camels and his negotiating skills, the cost averaged around \$250 per animal, and most were in good condition. The expedition also hired five natives—Arabs and Turks—to help care for the animals during the voyage and act as drovers when they reached America. On 15 February 1856, with the animals safely

Jefferson Davis first encouraged the Army's use of camels while serving in the U.S. Senate. In 1855, Secretary of War Davis persuaded a skeptical Congress to appropriate \$30,000 for the purchase and importation of camels for the Army. (Jefferson Davis, by Daniel Huntington, Army Art Collection)

loaded aboard, the expedition began its voyage home.

The expedition, slowed by storms and heavy gales, lasted nearly three months. It was Porter's foresight and diligence in caring for the animals that enabled them to survive the horrendous weather conditions. The *Supply* finally unloaded its cargo on 14 May at Indianola, Texas. During the voyage one male camel had died, but six

calves were born, of which two had survived the trip. The expedition therefore landed with a total of thirty-four camels, all of whom were in better health than when they left their native soil.

On 4 June, after allowing the camels some needed rest and a chance to acclimatize themselves, Wayne marched the herd 120 miles to San Antonio, arriving on 18 June. Wayne planned to establish a ranch and provide facilities for breeding the camels, but Secretary Davis had other ideas, stating, *"the establishment of a breeding farm did not enter into the plans of the department. The object at present is to ascertain whether the animal is adapted to military service, and can be economically and usefully employed therein."* Despite his objections, Davis did see the advantages in sending Porter on a second trip to secure more camels. There was over half of the appropriation money remaining and the *Supply* was still on loan from the Navy. On Davis' instructions, Porter once again left for Egypt. On 26-27 August, Wayne moved the herd some sixty miles northwest to Camp Verde, a more suitable location for his caravansary. He constructed a camel corral (khan) exactly like those found in Egypt and Turkey. Camp Verde would be the "corps" home for many years.

To satisfy Davis' concerns about the military usefulness of the camels, Wayne devised a small field test. He sent three wagons, each with a six-mule team, and six camels to San Antonio for a supply of oats. The mule drawn wagons, each carrying 1,800 pounds of oats, took nearly five days to make the return trip to camp. The six camels carried 3,648 pounds of oats and made the trip in two days, clearly demonstrating both their carrying ability and their speed. Several other tests served to confirm the transporting abilities of the camels and their superiority over horses and mules. Davis was much pleased with the results and stated in his annual report for 1857, *"These tests fully realize the anticipation entertained of their usefulness in the transportation of military supplies.... Thus far the result is as favorable as the most sanguine could have hoped."*



During surveying expeditions of the late 1850s that took place in the harsh climate of the Southwest, camels proved their worth by carrying large amounts of cargo and requiring little water in comparison to horses and mules. (The Search for Water, by Ernest Etienne de Franchville Narjot, The Stephen Decatur House Museum)

Over the next several months, Wayne worked with the civilian drovers and soldiers to accustom them to the camels and vice versa. They learned how to care for and feed the animals, manage the cumbersome camel saddles, properly pack the animals and, most importantly, how to deal with the camel's mannerisms and temperament. By nature the camel is a docile animal, but can demonstrate a violent, aggressive temper when abused or mistreated, literally kicking, biting or stomping an antagonist to death. Camels, like cows, chew a type of cud and when annoyed would often spit a large, gelatinous, foul smelling mass of cud at its detractor. The most difficult aspect for the men to get used to was the camel's somewhat pungent smell. Although camels really do not smell any worse than horses, mules or unwashed men, their smell was different and had a tendency to frighten horses unfamiliar with the

odor.

On 30 January 1857, Porter returned to the U.S. with an additional forty-one camels. Since by this time

five of the original herd had died from disease, the new arrivals brought the total number of camels to seventy. The animals were landed at Indianola on 10 February and then moved to Camp Verde.

In March 1857, James Buchanan became president and several changes were made which directly affected the camel experiment. John B. Floyd replaced Davis as Secretary of War and MAJ Wayne was transferred back to the Quartermaster Department in Washington, DC, thus removing in one blow two of the camel experiment's main supporters. Nevertheless, Secretary Floyd decided to continue his predecessor's experiment.

In response to a petition made by some 60,000 citizens for a permanent roadway which would help link the eastern territories with those of the far west, Congress authorized a contract to survey and build a wagon road along the thirty-fifth parallel from Fort Defiance, New Mexico Territory, to the Colorado River on the California/Arizona border. The contract was won by Mr. Edward Fitzgerald Beale, a former Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada who held the rank of brigadier general in the California militia. Beale was a good choice for the survey, having traveled parts of this region during the Mexican War and while surveying a route for a transcontinental railway.

It was only after Beale accepted the contract that he learned of the Secretary of War's special conditions. Floyd ordered Beale to take twenty-five of the camels with him on the surveying expedition. Beale protested vehemently at being encumbered with the camels, but Floyd was adamant. Since Wayne had left Camp Verde, the camels had been unused. The government had gone to some time and expense to test the camels in just this kind of situation and Floyd was determined to see if they would justify the money being spent on them. Although strongly opposed to the idea, Beale finally consented.

On 25 June 1857, the surveying expedition departed for Fort Defiance. The party consisted of twenty-five camels, two drovers, forty-four soldiers, twelve wagons, and some ninety-five dogs, horses and mules. At first, the performance of the camels convinced Beale that his original protests were well founded, as the animals moved slower than the horses and mules and were usually hours late reaching camp. On the second week of the journey, however, Beale changed his tune and noted that the camels were "walking up better." He later attributed the camel's slow start to their months of idleness and ease at Camp Verde. It was not long after that the camel's settled to their task and began outdistancing both horses and mules, packing a 700 pound load at a steady speed and traversing ground that caused the other animals to balk. By the time the expedition arrived at Fort Defiance in early August, Beale was convinced of the camel's abilities. On 24 July he wrote to Floyd, *"It gives me great pleasure to report the entire success of the expedition with the camels so far as I have tried it. Laboring under all the disadvantageswe have arrived here without an accident and although we have used the camels every day with heavy packs, have fewer sore backs and disabled ones by far than would have been the case travelling with pack mules. On starting I packed nearly seven hundred pounds on each camel, which I fear was too heavy a burden for the commencement of so long a journey; they, however, packed it daily until that weight was reduced by our diurnal use of it as forage for our mules."*

At the end of August the expedition left the fort on their survey. Beale was concerned about the dangers inherent in such a journey over such treacherous terrain, but these concerns proved unfounded in regard to the camels. *"Sometimes we forget they are with us. Certainly there never was anything so patient or enduring and so little troublesome as this noble animal. They pack their heavy load of corn, of which they never taste a grain; put up with any food offered them without complaint, and are always up with the wagons, and, withal, so perfectly docile and quiet that they are the admiration of the whole camp.(A)t this time there is not a man in camp who is not delighted with them. They are better today than when we left Camp Verde with them; especially since our men have learned, by experience, the best mode of packing them."*

The camels ate little of the forage, content instead to eat the scrub and prickly plants found along the trail. They could travel thirty to forty miles a day, go for eight to ten days without water and seemed not the slightest bit bothered by the oppressive climate. At one point the expedition became lost and was mistakenly led into an impassable canyon. The ensuing lack of grass and water for over thirty-six hours



Upon finding water, horses on a surveying expedition eagerly quench their thirst while the accompanying camels show little interest. The Army's camels proved they could withstand the oppressive climate of the American Southwest and other hardships that could send horses and mules into a panic. (Horses Quenching Their Thirst, Camels Disdaining, by Ernest Etienne de Franchville Narjot, The Stephen Decatur House Museum)

made the mules frantic. A small scouting party mounted on camels was sent out to find a trail. They found a river some twenty miles distant and led the expedition to it, literally saving the lives of both men and beasts. From then on, the camels were used to find all watering holes.

The expedition reached the Colorado River on 17 October, the last obstacle in their journey. While preparing to cross the river, Beale wrote to Floyd on the 18 October, *"An important part of all of our operations has been acted by the camels. Without the aid of this noble and useful brute, many hardships which we have been spared would have fallen to our lot; and our admiration for them has increased day by day, as some new hardship, endured patiently, more fully developed their entire adaptation and usefulness in the exploration of the wilderness. At times I have thought it impossible they could stand the test to which they have been put, but they seem to have risen equal to every*

trial and to have come off of every exploration with as much strength as before starting.... I have subjected them to trials which no other animal could possibly have endured; and yet I have arrived here not only without the loss of a camel, but they are admitted by those who saw them in Texas to be in as good a condition as when we left San Antonio.... I believe at this time I may speak for every man in our party, when I say that there is not one of them who would not prefer the most indifferent of our camels to four of our best mules."

On 19 October, as the expedition began to cross the Colorado, Beale was concerned about the camels getting across as he had been told they couldn't swim. He was pleasantly surprised when the largest camel was led to the river, plunged right in fully loaded and swam across with no difficulty. The remaining camels also crossed without incident, but two horses and ten mules drowned in the attempt. Their surveying mission completed, Beale led the expedition to Fort Tejon, about 100 miles north of Los Angeles, to rest and re-provision. The expedition had lasted nearly four months and covered over twelve hundred miles.

Floyd was extremely pleased with the results. He ordered Beale to bring the camels back to Camp Verde, but Beale demurred, giving the excuse that if the troops in California became involved in the "Mormon War," the camels would prove invaluable carrying supplies. Instead, Beale moved the camels to the ranch of his business partner, Samuel A. Bishop, in the lower San Joaquin Valley. Bishop used the camels in his personal business, hauling freight to his ranch and the new town arising near Fort Tejon. During one such venture, Bishop and his men were threatened with attack by a large band of Mohave Indians. Bishop mounted his men on the camels and charged, routing the Indians. It was the only combat action using the camels and it was performed not by the U.S. Army, but by civilians.

In April 1858, Beale was ordered to survey a second route along the thirty-fifth parallel from Fort Smith, Arkansas to the Colorado River for use as a wagon road and stage line. He was given the use of another twenty-five camels from Camp Verde for this expedition. It took Beale nearly a year to complete this mission and his report to Floyd again extolled the exemplary performance of the camels.

In his annual report to Congress in December 1858, Floyd enthusiastically stated, *"The entire adaptation of camels to military operations on the plains may now be taken as demonstrated."* He further declared that the camel had proven its *"great usefulness and superiority over the horse for all movements upon the plains or deserts"* and recommended that Congress *"authorize the purchase of 1,000 camels."*

Congress, however, was not convinced and authorized no further funding. Undeterred, Floyd pleaded his case again in his annual report in 1859, *"The experiments thus far made – and they are pretty full – demonstrate that camels constitute a most useful and economic means of transportation for men and supplies through the great desert and barren portions of our interior... An abundant supply of these animals would enable our Army to give greater and prompter protection to our frontiers and to all our interoceanic routes than three times their cost expended in another way. As a measure of economy I can not too strongly recommend the purchase of a full supply to the consideration of Congress."* Despite the abundant evidence and sound arguments Congress wouldn't budge. Floyd tried again in 1860, but by then the clouds of civil war had Congress' undivided attention and the idea of purchasing camels was far from their minds.

In November 1859, the Army took charge of the twenty-eight camels on Bishop's farm and moved them to Fort Tejon. Although the animals were in rather poor physical shape, there were now three more than Beale had originally left on the ranch, demonstrating MAJ Wayne's theory that the camels – if given the opportunity – could breed on their own. This herd remained at Fort Tejon until March 1860, when they were relocated to a rented grazing area some twelve miles from the fort. In September several camels were sent to Los Angeles to take part in the Army's first official test of camels in California.

The test, under the command of the Assistant Quartermaster, CPT Winfield Scott Hancock, was to see if the camels could effectively be used as an express service. The camels were tested against the existing service, a two-mule buckboard, in carrying messages some three hundred miles from Camp Fitzgerald to Camp Mohave on the Colorado River. Two test runs were made and, in both, the camels died from exhaustion, leading the Army to realize what other tests had already shown, that camels were not bred for speed but for transport. Although the test proved that the "camel express" was significantly cheaper, it was no faster than the mule and buckboard service and was much harder on the camels. This was the only test they had ever failed.

A second Army experiment was run in early 1861 when four camels were assigned to accompany the Boundary Commission on their surveying expedition of the California-Nevada boundary. The expedition, hopelessly disorganized from the start, was a complete failure and nearly ended in disaster. The expedition got lost and wandered into the merciless Mojave Desert. After losing several mules and abandoning most of their equipment, it was the steadfast camels that saved the day and led the survivors to safety.

The advent of the Civil War effectively halted the camel experiment. Rebel troops occupied Camp Verde on 28 February 1861 and captured several of the remaining camels, using them to transport salt and carry mail around San Antonio. The camels suffered greatly at the hands of their captors, who had an intense dislike for the animals. They were badly mistreated, abused and a few of them were deliberately killed.

The herd near Fort Tejon, numbering thirty-one camels, was transferred to the Los Angeles Quartermaster Depot on 17 June 1861. During the next three years the camels were kept well fed and continued to breed, frequently being transferred from post to post as no one knew what else to do with them. Several recommendations to use them for mail service were proposed, but never adopted. The expense of feeding and caring for the unused animals finally became too much and, on the recommendation of the Department of the Pacific, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton ordered them to be sold at public auction. Apparently unaware of the numerous successful tests performed with the camels, Stanton stated, *"I cannot ascertain that these have ever been so employed as to be of any advantage to the Military Service, and I do not think that it will be practical to make them useful."*

On 26 February 1864, the thirty-seven camels from California were sold for \$1,945, or \$52.56 per camel. The surviving forty-four camels from Camp Verde were finally recovered at the end of the war. On 6 March 1866, they too were put on the auction block, bringing \$1,364, or \$31 per camel. The Army's Quartermaster-General, MG Montgomery Meigs, approved the sale, stating his hopes that civilian enterprises might more successfully develop use of the camel and expressing his sincere regrets

that the experiment had ended in failure.

The camels ended up in circuses, giving rides to children, running in “camel races,” living on private ranches, or working as pack animals for miners and prospectors. They became a familiar sight in California, the Southwest, Northwest, and even as far away as British Columbia, their strange appearance often drawing crowds of curious people. In 1885, as a young boy of five living at Fort Seldon, New Mexico, GEN Douglas MacArthur recalled seeing a camel: *“One day a curious and frightening animal with a blobbish head, long and curving neck, and shambling legs, moseyed around the garrison.... the animal was one of the old army camels.”*

Eventually, when the curiosity wore off or their new owners simply did not want or need them anymore, many of the camels were turned loose in the wild to fend for themselves. They were seen for many years afterward, wandering the deserts and plains of the Southwest. The last of the original Army camels, Topsy, was reported to have died in April 1934, at Griffith Park, Los Angeles, at the age of eighty, but accounts of camel sightings continued for decades. Although never officially designated, “U.S. Army Camel Corps,” this is how the Army’s camel experiment has been remembered. Ignored and abandoned, it was an ignominious and unfortunate end for these noble “ships of the desert.”

US Army Camel Corps

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The World's Oldest Surviving Pair of Glasses (Circa 1475)

in Technology | September 28th, 2015 [Leave a Comment](#)

openculture.com



oldest pair of glasses

Above, we have what *The On-Line Museum and Encyclopedia of Vision Aids* believes is the world's oldest surviving pair of glasses. Dating back to the 15th century, the glasses belonged to the Eighth Shogun, Yoshimasa Ashikaga, who reigned from 1449 to 1473, during the Muromachi period of Japanese history. Both the glasses and their accompanying case were made of hand-carved white ivory.

Glasses were actually first invented, however, in Italy (some say Florence, to be precise) in 1286 or thereabouts. In a sermon from 1306, a Dominican friar wrote: "It is not yet twenty years since there was found the art of making eyeglasses, which make for good vision... And it is so short a time that this new art, never before extant, was discovered." In the mid 14th century, paintings started to appear with people wearing eyeglasses. (Take for example Tommaso da Modena's 1352 portrait showing the cardinal Hugh de Provence reading.) A gallery of other historic eyewear can be viewed [here](#).

via Erik Kwakkel

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This road in California suddenly rose up and crumbled and no one knows why

sciencealert.com

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This road in

California suddenly rose up and crumbled and no one knows why
BEC CREW
25 NOV 2015

A 60-metre stretch of road in Santa Clarita, California rose up off the ground and crumbled in the space of about 3.5 hours on Thursday 10 November, with further buckling reported over the next few days.

Some parts of the road are now completely cracked and unusable, while others have risen more than 4.5 metres (15 feet) above the ground, but no one's quite sure what caused such a dramatic shift. When roads buckle like this, it's usually due to serious shifts in the earth below caused by earthquakes or serious rainstorms, but geologists have already ruled out these possibilities.

"There was no big rainstorm that triggered this. There was no big earthquake that triggered this," University of California, Los Angeles geologist Jeremy Boyce told CBS news.

Boyce took the opportunity to get his students out on the field to see a rare example of how geological events can happen surprisingly quickly - turns out Earth's bits and pieces don't always move at a glacial pace.

"When we think about geology, we think about processes that happen over millions and billions of years, so the opportunity to bring students out and see something happening over a scale of hours gives them the idea that not only does geology take forever, it can also happen almost instantaneously," he said.

The best hypothesis scientists have been able to come up with is that the crumbling, buckling road is the result of a progressive landslide in the surrounding hills. Satellite images going back to 2011 show obvious cracks in the surface of the road, as well as significant shifts in the shape of the hills, perhaps due to getting saturated by a great deal of water at some point.

"[It] appears as though the soil moved underneath the road, and then lifted it up. Which is quite odd," George Dvorsky reports for Gizmodo. "Normally, a landslide would just wipe the road away. Before-and-after pics of the site show that the road is situated on a box cut, and that the unloading of material from the slope likely contributed to the landslide."

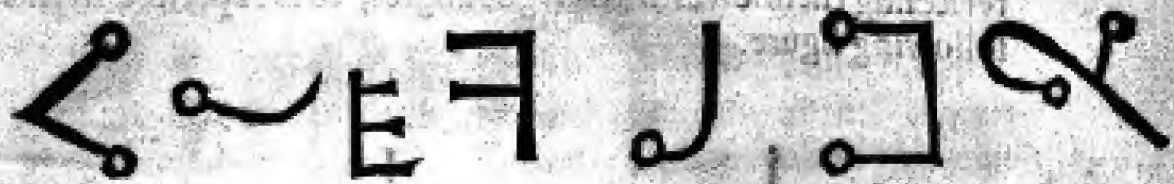
The jury's still out on this one, but for now, the 3-km stretch of Vasquez Canyon Road between Lost Creek Road and Vasquez Way is reportedly closed until further notice.

Here's some recent drone footage of the site:

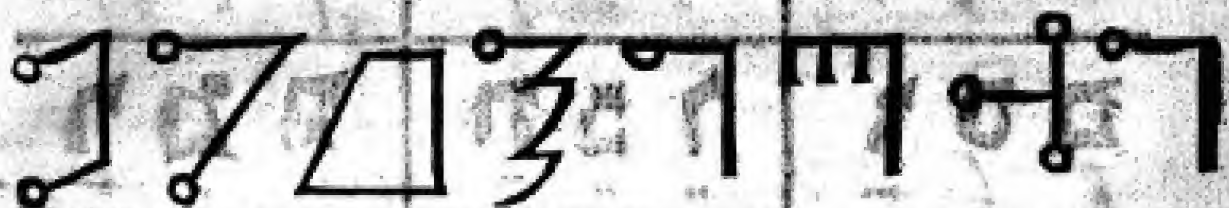
/ Copyright 2014 Evernote Corporation. All rights reserved. */ .en-markup-crop-options { top: 18px !important; left: 50% !important; margin-left: -100px !important; width: 200px !important; border: 2px rgba(255,255,255,.38) solid !important; border-radius: 4px !important; } .en-markup-crop-options div div:first-of-type { margin-left: 0px !important; }*

The writing called the passing of the River.

Zain Van He Daleth Gimel Beth Aleph



Samech Nun Mem Lamed Caph Iod Teth Cheth



Tan Schin Res Kaph Zade Pe Ain



There is moreover another fashion amongst the Cabalists, formerly had in great esteem, but now it is so common, that it is placed amongst prophane things, and it is this. The twenty seven Characters of the Hebrews may be divided into three Classes, whereof every one contains nine letters. The first, viz. אבגדהוזחט which are the seals or marks of simple numbers, and of intellectuall things, distributed into nine orders of Angels. The second hath יכלמנסעפצ the marks of tens, and of Celestial things, in the nine Orbs of the heavens. The third hath the other four letters, with the five final, by order, viz. קרשחזסןףץ which are marks of hundreds, and inferior things, viz. four simple Elements, and of five kinds of perfect compounds. They do now and then distribute these

AZATPI
onno gli Soldati de Galera



The Vampire.

BY VICTOR DE BRANDT.

THE small steamer which plies between Constantinople and the Prince Islands had landed us on the shore of Prinkipo. The company consisted of a Polish family, father, mother, daughter and her bridegroom, and I.

There was another passenger. On the wooden bridge traversing the Golden Horn from Stamboul to Prinkipo, a young Greek joined us; to judge by the portfolio, he was a painter. Long black locks hung down over his shoulders, his face was pale, his black eyes sunk into their sockets. At first the man interested me: he was very officious, and his local knowledge considerable. But he spoke too much, and in a few moments I left him.

Much more pleasant I found the Polish family. The parents were kind, honest people; the bridegroom young, handsome, with the manners of a man of the world. They had come to spend the summer months here; the daughter, somewhat sickly, was in search of a southern air cure like this. The beautiful pale girl had perhaps passed through a long illness, or there might be the germ. She leant on the arm of her bridegroom, rested often, and a dry cough interrupted repeatedly her whispers. Whenever she coughed her bridegroom stopped immediately.

Full of pity and compassion he looked at her, and she again looked up to him, as if to say, "It is nothing. I feel so very happy." They hoped for happiness and recovery.

After the departure of the Greek the family engaged a residence in a French hotel.

We lunched in company, and when the noon heat became milder we ascended slowly and gently a gravel path to a pine hill to admire the view. No sooner had we found a suitable place and camped down than our Greek appeared. He greeted us with a nod, then lay down on the turf a few steps from us. He opened his portfolio and began to draw.

"I believe," said I, "that he leans with his back against the rock that we should not follow his work."

"There is no need to look at him," observed the bridegroom, "we see enough before us," and after a moment he added, "It seems as if he would use us for his model—let him do it!"

We had indeed enough to see. There is not in the whole world a more charming and happier spot than Prinkipo. The air was pure and soft, and so beautiful that the eye, as if cradled on down, glided from distance to distance.

Nowhere a large ship was seen, only two small English boats decorated with flags. Twelve officers of the Turkish navy were sending along a canoe with a swift stroke, and as the oars were equally lifted from the water it flowed, it sprinkled, like molten silver. Trusting dolphins bustled about between the boats, and flew in a regular arch over the water. On the blue heavens from time to time gigantic eagles were seen flying calmly between the two continents.

The slope beneath was covered with blooming roses, and the air was redolent with perfume. From the arcades in the café sweet melodies sounded, subdued and dreamy.

A mighty, moving impression! We were mute, and our whole being hung on the ecstasies of the picture.

The young Polish lady lay on the turf, and her head rested on the breast of her beloved. The pale oval of her tender face took a breath of slight colour, and from her blue eyes hot tears ran down her cheeks. The bridegroom knew the emotion—he bent down and kissed tear after tear. The mother looked on, she felt like her daughter, and I—my heart was overfilled.

"Here one must get well! The body and mind must regain their health and strength," whispered the girl. "What a wonderfully beautiful country!"

O fortunato peregrin cui lice
Giungere in questa terra alma e felice!

In my enthusiasm I was reminded of Tasso's sweet verse in *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

The Haughty Beauty and the Backward Wooer. 715

"God knows I have no enemies; but had I any I would forgive them!" exclaimed the father with a trembling voice.

And again all was still. All felt exceedingly happy and content. Every one of us felt a world of bliss, and every one would have gladly shared our happiness with the world. We all were overwhelmed by these sentiments.

We scarcely took any notice that the Greek, after an hour's painting, had left with his portfolio under his arm. We remained.

At last, after several hours, when the horizon assumes yon violet tinge, which acts so charmingly upon us, the mother reminded us to return. We descended slowly to the hotel, slowly but with an elastic step like careless children.

In the hotel we rested on the verandah. We had scarcely taken our seats, when we hear from below quarrelling and shouting. Our Greek heaps insults on the proprietor and we are amused.

The amusement was soon to end. "If I had no other guests here. You must pay my bill," cried the owner, and came up to our table.

"Can you tell me," asked the young Pole, "who is this gentleman? What is his name?"

"Eh, who knows the fellow's name," he replied in a gruff voice, looking out of the verandah. "We call him the Vampire!"

"A painter, is he?"

"A filthy trade! He paints only corpses. As soon as somebody dies in Constantinople or in the environs, the fellow finishes the very first day the picture of the dead person. He paints them before he sees them; he is never mistaken, the vulture!"

The old Polish lady uttered a terrible cry! In her arms lay her daughter, fainting and deathly pale.

The bridegroom jumped up and ran down the staircase. With one hand he took the Greek by the throat, with the other he took his portfolio. The portfolio was opened.

There were over thirty pictures representing corpses. Among them, to the horror of all, he found the head of the young Polish girl drawn with a masterly hand—the eyes closed, a twig of myrtle placed on her alabaster brow.

The Haughty Beauty and the Backward Wooer.

"I THINK love is a delusion and marriage a mistake," said the haughty beauty.

"Then do you intend *never* to marry?" asked the backward wooer, aghast.

"Never!" she said firmly. "There is only one contingency that could possibly make me think of it, and that is not in the least likely to happen."

"I *know* that love is no delusion by the reality of its painfulness," he said sorrowfully. "And whether marriage be a mistake, I don't know; but I, for one, am willing to risk it."

"Then why on earth don't you?" she asked tauntingly. "There are plenty of women about."

"Plenty of women, but only one woman—for me. And she flouts me."

"I wonder why."

"So do I."

"Don't answer in rhyme," she said sharply. "Why don't you try to find out?"

"What use is it to know the reason? The fact is bad enough. She would only empty the vials of her scorn on me. Or do you want to boast of another rejected proposal, Lady Grace?"

"You are very rude. I have never rejected you."

"Only because I have never in so many words asked you to marry me. But if I did, Lady Grace, I should only learn——"

"You are not in the least likely to do it," interrupted Lady Grace; "but if you did, you would only learn"—she suddenly turned a strangely softened face towards him—"you would only learn that . . . that was the very contingency I spoke of."

"Grace!" . . . And then the beauty was no longer haughty nor the wooer backward.

GILBERT STANHOPE.

The Belled and Sashed Buzzard.

From The Richmond (Va.) Dispatch.

For some time an unaccountable noise at certain hours of the day has disturbed the comfort and tranquillity of many a mind in one neighborhood of King George County, and at the moment when many were about ready to accept the theory that these invisible sounds of mournful, mingled music were "war signs from Heaven," a buzzard sailed close by, with a combination bell swinging from its neck, "jingling" forth in "touching tones," and—the mystery was solved. The belled buzzard also had long streamers, or sashes, suspended from its neck and tail, but whence it cometh or whither it goeth is not known here.

The New York Times

Published: July 6, 1898

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Do NOT watch: Viewers 'DIED' after watching terrifying 'Satanic film with threat to Obama'

express.co.uk

THIS mysterious creepy anonymously-made video posted on YouTube has gone viral despite claims some people who watched it in full later died.

By Jon Austin

PUBLISHED: 03:00, Thu, Oct 22, 2015 | UPDATED: 08:11, Thu, Oct 22, 2015



YouTube

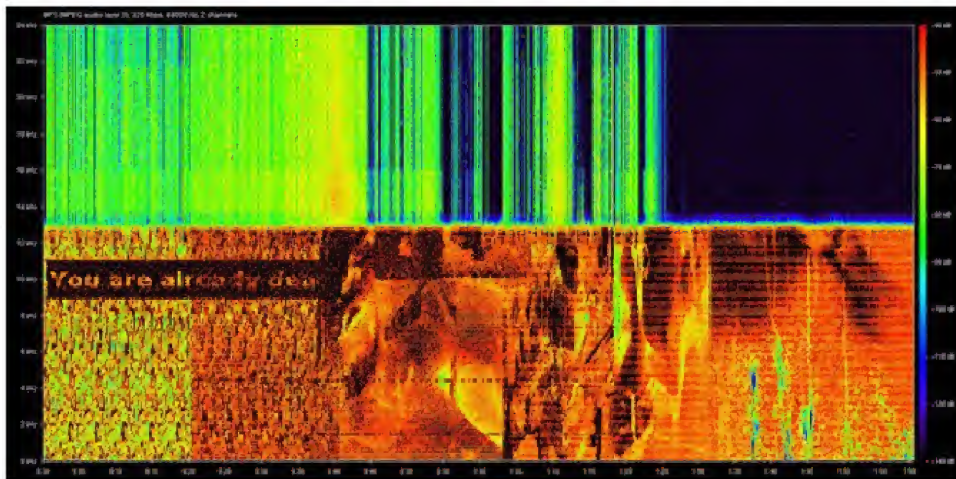
The black and white but slickly produced two-minute video features a spooky masked person wearing a medieval plague-doctor-like costume in a derelict building.

The unknown person carries out a series of odd body movements to an eerie soundtrack of disturbing white noise and interference, while strange symbols flash on screen.

The video's title – 01101101 01110101 01100101 01110010 01110100 01100101 – is said to be binary code, and if googled or put into YouTube brings up a host of other weird clips, although non quite as odd as this.

When the code is converted to letters it spells out muetre which is Spanish for DEATH.

The video has also been linked to Satanism and a copy of it on a DVD with Satanic images was apparently sent to a Swedish tech blog.



YouTube

This also included binary code which when deciphered translates to: "You have one year or less".

Computer nerds have also translated the screeching sound track into a visual representation which it is claimed reveals an image of a woman

being tied up or tortured with the chilling message: "You are already dead."

And, when the audio from the DVD's main menu is similarly displayed – using a spectrogram – it uncovers a picture of a skull.

The video has been discussed on various sites, including Reddit, where one user speculated: "At worst, its a terrorist threat or the work of some killer."

Other techies have carried out a frame-by-frame analysis and said they found morse code and another set of numbers flashing up on screen - which they say are the GPS co-ordinates for the White House.



YouTube

There is no way I am watching this through, I have heard that some people who did ended up dead.

Person who failed to watch entire video

The morse code message apparently spells out REDLIPSLIKETENTH – an anagram of "kill the president".

The video was apparently found on a park bench and posted on YouTube by a paranormal channel, but it initially failed to take off, until the Swedish tech blog received it and also posted a

version.

Some viewers have likened it to the video in the horror movie The Ring.

This included a black and white film on a VHS video which contained a series of creepy images and symbols.

Anyone who watched it then received a phone call which warned them they had just days to live before meeting an untimely and grisly end.

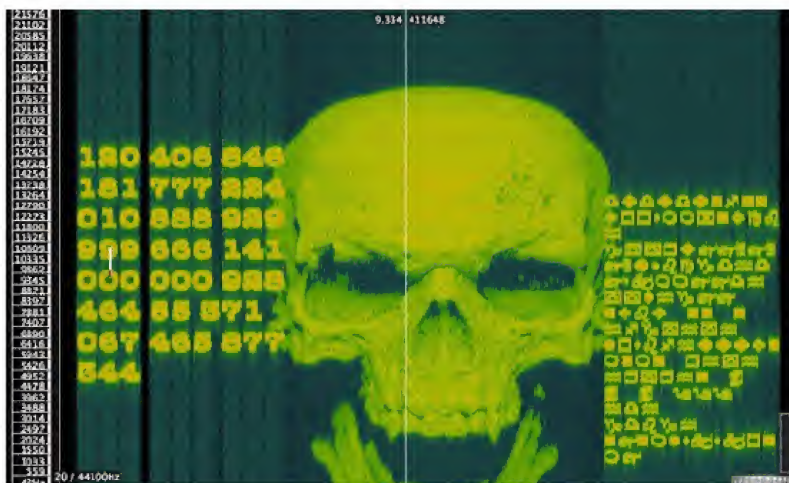
One viewer said: "Is this some attempt at a video that kills you like the one from The Ring or something?"

Another said: "There is no way I am watching this through, I have heard that some people who did ended up dead."

Of course, there is no evidence to suggest this has ever actually happened.

Other speculations are that it is just a slick promo for an upcoming Halloween horror or computer game or just a bored internet nerd is behind the film.

If you know more about the origins of the video email jon.austin@express.co.uk.



YouTube

19 Comments

davedaveNEW27 days ago

Get a proper job you sorry excuse for a journo.

FinleyChuchNEW33 days ago

They're here and I can't do anything

MohamedSattarNEW34 days ago

Does the PM read the paper?

SteveGNEW36 days ago

Mr Austin, have you ever heard of a movie called 'The Ring'?



YouTube

Perhaps you should check it out.

ScottAlanNEW38 days ago

If anybody is scared by that, they must be scared of their own shadow.

Country-girlNEW39 days ago

Cameron should watch it.

AnnPorterNEW37 days ago

He's already scared by his own shadow, he dont need any help

hammer6NEW41 days ago

Is this some sort of a joke? For those who have crapped their pants. Sit down. Have a nice cup of tea. AND GET F***ING REAL!

Jim_WatfordNEW41 days ago

This paper gets worse by the day.

Anonymous

This comment has been deleted

SaxonNEW37 days ago

You're lucky. I wake up dead every morning - or at least part of me has rigor mortis.

PhilB1NEW41 days ago

Gave me ear ache... That's about it.

TruthTellerNEW41 days ago

Can The PM watch it. Pleeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeease

Prakash PatelNEW41 days ago

That was interesting. I'm now going out to watch paint dry and some planks warp.

the original chunkyNEW41 days ago

Scary? Pfft!

LogicianNEW41 days ago

You're joking ... amateurish, cliché'd and boring ... any half-bright kid could put that together.

Billericay DickieNEW41 days ago

Some teenagers will be right proud of that

KGM3NEW42 days ago

I bit too late for telling me that now - just watched it on another online newspaper - help !

Teddy BearNEW41 days ago

Didn't watch it but the pictures are scary enough. My device won't play the vids on here anyway.

It would make a pretty scary horror film. The analysis of the video is weird stuff.

+2

Too late 4 U now, you're already derp.

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Was Dracula Story inspired by Abhartach, the Bloodsucking Chieftain of Ireland?

ancient-origins.net



Dracula

2 May, 2015 - 00:22dhwtv

Was Dracula Story inspired by Abhartach, the Bloodsucking Chieftain of Ireland?

Tales of vampires and other similar blood-sucking creatures have been told in various societies across the world. The most famous of these tales is the story of Dracula, written by Bram Stoker, and published in 1897. This Gothic horror novel tells of Count Dracula's attempt to move

from Transylvania to England in order to seek new blood and spread the undead curse. Hoping to prevent the Count from succeeding in his quest is a small group of men and women led by Dracula's archenemy, Professor Abraham van Helsing. It has been popularly speculated that the character of Dracula is based on Vlad the Impaler, the 15th century Prince of Wallachia. Nevertheless, there are those who believe that it was Irish folklore, rather than Romanian history that inspired Stoker's Dracula.



It is popularly believed that Stoker's inspiration for Dracula came from the life of Vlad the Impaler. The Ambras Castle Portrait of Vlad III.

It is popularly believed that Stoker's inspiration for Dracula came from the life of Vlad the Impaler. The Ambras Castle Portrait of Vlad III. Photo source: Wikimedia.

Stoker's famous novel was not originally entitled *Dracula*. In fact, Stoker's original manuscript was simply entitled as *The Undead*, in which the blood-sucking count was named "Count Wampyr". Stoker, incidentally, worked as a civil servant in Dublin, and the first novel he wrote was called *Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland*, a satirical account of the bureaucratic lifestyle he longed to escape from. Additionally, he had never travelled further east than Vienna, and is said to have never actually visited Romania. In 1998, professor Elizabeth Miller published an essay in which she maintained that Stoker's research notes for *Dracula* do not indicate that he had detailed biographical knowledge of Vlad III.

Some historians therefore suggested that Stoker did not receive his inspiration for his dark and twisted tale from the brutal life of Vlad the Impaler, but rather developed his ideas from Irish folklore.

Much academic debate surrounds the true inspiration for Bram Stoker's Dracula. Portrait of



Bram Stoker, 1906 (Wikimedia Commons)

Much academic debate surrounds the true inspiration for Bram Stoker's Dracula. Portrait of Bram Stoker, 1906

Just over a decade ago, Bob Curran, a lecturer in Celtic History and Folklore at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, published a paper in the peer-reviewed journal *History Ireland*, in which he hypothesized that Stoker based his novel on the legendary story of Abhartach, a 5th century chieftain known for his bloodsucking habits.

In the early 17th century, Dr Geoffrey Keating published the first written record of Abhartach in his work *Foras Feasa ar Eireann* ('A General History of Ireland'). Although today viewed as a folk legend, Keating referred to Abhartach as a real historical figure.

According to his account, Abhartach was a brutal 5th century warlord, who ruled over a small kingdom in an area bordered by what is now the town of Garvagh in Ireland. Abhartach was greatly feared by his people, who believed he had dark and magical powers. The townsfolk wanted to rid themselves of this troublesome king so they called upon a chieftain from a neighboring kingdom, named Cathain, to kill him.

Cathain succeeded in killing Abhartach and buried him standing up, as befitted a Celtic chieftain. However, the story goes that Abhartach rose from the grave and demanded a bowl of blood from the wrists of his subjects to sustain his energy. Cathain returned to kill Abhartach a second time, but again he rose from the dead, demanding the blood of the living.



Illustration from 'The Natural History of Two Species of Irish Vampire'

Illustration from 'The Natural History of Two Species of Irish Vampire' (public domain)

Cathain sought the advice of a Christian saint, who informed him that Abhartach was a *marbh bheo* (walking dead) and must be killed with a sword made of yew wood, before being buried upside down with a great stone placed upon his body to weigh him down, preventing him from rising again. Cathain followed this

advice and today, in the town of Slaghtaverty, a capstone can be seen at the site where Abhartach was supposedly buried.

The story of Abhartach was retold centuries later in Patrick Weston Joyce's *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*, 12 years before Bram Stoker wrote his famous novel *Dracula*. Interestingly, the Celtic word 'dreach-fhuola' means tainted blood, and some maintain that it was this word from which Stoker developed the name of his central character.

We may never know for certain whether Stoker's Dracula is based on the Wallachian Vlad or Irish mythology. Still, old habits die hard, and while Transylvania in Romania will continue to be regarded as the haunting grounds of Count Dracula, the tale of Abhartach may well have played a central role in developing the vampire we know today.

Featured image: Adapted image of a screenshot from the trailer for Dracula (1958)

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Comments

Rodulf wrote on 2 May, 2015 - 15:09

More xtian propaganda to demonize the Celt people.

Geob wrote on 8 May, 2015 - 20:22

Not even slightly. Given that distinctly "Celtic" Christianity was exported from Ireland, it's clear that the only propaganda element is the specific fact that the saint knew how to exorcise the now demonic chieftain. There is not even the faintest hint that this is about denigrating the very widely diverse European cultural grouping known as celts. Unless, that is, you are insisting celts MUST be pagan, which is somewhat ill informed.

Salverda wrote on 2 May, 2015 - 18:26

I have always thought that the legend of the vampire began with the displaced Roman Jews from the days of Trajan, who made their way to Romania where isolated groups of them became known as "Gypsies." These brought with them a bias against Christianity, whom they considered as a cult of blood drinkers, whose leader lived on after being put to death by a "wooden stake," and promised eternal life to his followers through "drinking his blood and

eating his flesh." His dread of the cross is a dead give away. And that the term "Dracula" derives from the phrase "Dragon" or "Serpent's" seed (the antagonist of the widely known Edenic promise). Dracula is an old Jewish moral tale, malicious gossip really, intended to besmirch Jesus Christ. Now, I could be wrong, but I still think that it is just as good a theory as this one.

Sometimes "Gypsies" are said to be "Egyptians" but with the stereotypes of wandering and merchant, I favor "Jacobite" as the derivation. Besides, in my opinion I would trace both terms, "Egypt" and "Copt" back to the name "Jacob" (See https://www.academia.edu/4112686/The_Hebrew_Danites_as_the_Greek_Danaans).

Luccas wrote on 3 May, 2015 - 08:40

Don't Christians drink the blood and eat the flesh of their "Messiah" at every Mass?
Vampirism and Ghoulishness/Cannibalism celebrated as the most (un)"holy" Sacraments .. yeah that explains a few things about the world we live in.

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Was Mozart's sister actually the most talented musician in the family?

By Elizabeth Davis, 2nd November 2015, 16:09
2015-11-02T16:09:18

classicfm.com

Perhaps the famous composer wasn't the only – or even the most – musically gifted sibling in the Mozart household...



track picture

Mozart toured Europe, wowing audiences across the continent and impressing critics.

But we're not talking about Wolfgang.

Nannerl Mozart – Wolfgang's older sister – went on tour with her

brother and father and, a new play argues, she was actually the more talented sibling.

The Other Mozart by Sylvia Milo, opens in New York this month. Speaking to The Huffington Post, Milo said that she hadn't even heard of Nannerl until she visited Mozart's house in Vienna and saw a painting of the two siblings together:

"My attention was drawn to the fact that there was a woman sitting next to Mozart looking like his equal... Yet the things she composed did not survive. It just seemed to me like a story that needed to be told. If no one else was going to do that, I decided I would do it myself."



key people in mozart's life

Was Nannerl the real talent in the family?

Nannerl – whose real name was Maria Anna – toured Europe with her father and young brother, Wolfgang Amadeus.

Far from being in her now famous brother's shadow, Nannerl actually shone as the more talented youngster.

In a letter, Leopold Mozart (their father, pictured above) wrote: "My little girl plays the most difficult works which we have... with incredible precision and so excellently. What it all amounts to is this, that my little girl, although she is only 12 years old, is one of the most skilful players in Europe."

Gallery: Introducing the great female composers

And we don't just have to take their dad's word for it. In 1762, the two little Mozarts played for a collection of aristocrats in Munich. One of those present, Count Karl von Zinzendorf recorded his thoughts in his diary: "The little child from Salzburg and his sister played the harpsichord. The poor little fellow plays marvellously. He is a child of spirit, lively, charming. His sister's playing is masterly, and he applauded her."

And what about composition?

Nannerl also composed – she sent one of her compositions to her brother in 1770 and he responded in a letter with the words: "My dear sister! I am in awe that you can compose so well, in a word, the song you wrote is beautiful." Sadly, the composition hasn't survived.

Milo told The Huffington Post: "[Nannerl] copied down some of Wolfgang's compositions when he was too young to write them down. So, it's possible some of Wolfgang's compositions are hers. We also know when he was in London working on his first symphony [above], she wrote it all down and orchestrated it for him. It's unclear how big their collaboration was, but she was an extremely talented musician.

When Nannerl reached the age when she could get married, her father stopped taking her on the road – but she carried on composing until her marriage in 1784.

"The society was as such that, of course, there were women composers, but the ones that could show their work were nobility. Women had to play for nothing. If they made money off their music, they were thought of as prostitutes.

"It's so clear when you study history from the woman's point of view that we don't have the full picture," said Milo.

St John's Smith Square, London, is celebrating Mozart from November to May this season with 'Exploring Mozart – From Love to an Academy in Vienna'. The opening concert on 26 November celebrates two other women in Mozart's life – the Weber sisters Aloysia and Constanze (who he went on to marry). Find out more here.

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May 21, 2013 By Medievalists.net



Henry I & White Ship, from a genealogical roll

It was perhaps the worst maritime disaster of the Middle Ages, not just because it cost 300 lives, but because one of them was the heir to the Anglo-Norman Empire. One scholar has a theory that the sinking of the *White Ship* on the night of November 25, 1120 was not a tragic accident, rather a case of mass murder.

In the year 1120, King Henry I was at the peak of his power. He had taken control of both England and Normandy having defeated and imprisoned his brother Robert Curthose, and crushed several rebellious barons. He had also succeeded in convincing the French king to acknowledge that his son, William the Atheling, would succeed him as Duke of Normandy.

King Henry had at least a dozen children, but only two were with his wife Matilda of Scotland, a daughter also named Matilda and a son named William. The rest of his children were born to his mistresses, although Henry treated his illegitimate sons and daughters very well and gave them important positions in his government. William, as his only legitimate son, stood to inherit his kingdom. With the recent agreement between Henry and the French king, and the marriage of William with the eldest daughter of Count Fulk V of Anjou a year earlier, it now seemed that his son would face no obstacles in inheriting the Anglo-Norman empire.

In November of 1120, King Henry and his party (including his son) were preparing to sail from Normandy to England. Henry had often crossed the English Channel although such a trip was not always easy or safe (see **William the Conqueror and the Channel Crossing of 1066**). A fleet was assembled at the Norman port of Barfleur and on November 25th the winds became right to make the trip. It was then that a man named Thomas FitzStephen approached the King, saying to him, "I have a vessel which is aptly called the *White Ship*, excellently fitted out and ready for the royal service."

He added that his grandfather Airard had served Henry's father, William I, in carrying the Norman Duke across the Channel when he invaded England back in 1066. Now, Thomas wanted to gain similar accolades with his newly built ship.

Henry replied, "Your request meets my approval. I have indeed chosen a fine ship for myself and will not change it; but I entrust to you my sons William and Richard, whom I love as my own life, and many nobles of my realm."

As the King set sail, his son William and others began to board the *White Ship* – it seems that many young noble men and women took this opportunity to travel without the stern gaze of Henry. Among those who got on the ship were two of William's half-siblings – Richard and Matilda. One report suggests that close to 300 people were on board, including fifty crew who

manned the oars.

Soon wine was being handed out freely, with the passengers and crew indulging themselves. At this point, a few people decided to get off the boat, as, according to the chronicler Orderic Vitalis, “they realized that there was too great a crowd of wild and headstrong young men on board.” This included Stephen of Blois, who said he was too sick from diarrhoea to make the trip.

Orderic Vitalis notes that “priests came there with other ministers carrying holy water to bless them, they laughed and drove them away with abuse and guffaws.” Instead, William and the other passengers called upon the ship’s captain, Thomas, to depart and see if the ship was fast enough to catch up with the King’s boat.

It was now just before midnight. Orderic explains what happens next:

At length he gave the signal to put to sea. Then the rowers made haste to take up their oars and, in high spirits because they knew nothing of what lay ahead, put the rest of the equipment ready and made the ship lean forward and race through the sea. As the drunken oarsmen were rowing with all their might, and the luckless helmsman paid scant attention to steering the ship though he sea, the port side of the White Ship struck violently against a huge rock, which was uncovered each day as the tide ebbed and covered once more at high tide. Two planks were shattered and, terrible to relate, the ship capsized without warning. Everyone cried out at once in their great peril, but the water pouring into the boat soon drowned their cries and all alike perished.



WhiteShipSinking

The scene must have been horrific. Hundreds of people had been thrown into the water, and very few of them would know how to swim. Although the waters were reportedly calm, it would have been a very dark night (the moon was less than a quarter full on that date). People on the shore and even in Henry’s own boat could hear the sounds of people screaming, but they did not where it was coming from.

According to one report William the Atheling was able to climb aboard a small boat and almost got away, but when he heard his half-sister Matilda crying out for help he ordered the ship to go back. As the desperate people clambered to get on board, the small ship was swamped and sank.

As the dying screams subsided, there was two people left hanging onto the mast of the *White Ship* – a young noble named Geoffrey of Laigle and a butcher from Rouen named Berold. Thomas, the ship’s captain, came to the surface, and said to the pair, “The king’s son – what has become of him?” When they told the captain of the prince’s fate, Thomas replied, “It is vain for me to go on living” before slipping back into the sea.

During the night the young Geoffrey could not hang on any longer. He went into the water, leaving only Berold alive. In the morning rescue arrived when local fishermen came onto the

scene. For years afterwards the butcher would tell the story of how he was the only survivor of the *White Ship* disaster.

Over the next few days a few bodies found there way ashore, but William the Atheling was never found. Back in England, rumours spread of the disaster, but no one wanted to tell the King. Finally, a young boy was sent to Henry and revealed what had happened. The King was overcome and wept for his children and followers who had died.

Many chroniclers would explain the sinking of the *White Ship* was an accident, caused by the drunkenness of the passengers and crew – it was just God's will for the sinful behaviour of those aboard. However, one scholar has a different theory. Victoria Chandler, who taught at Georgia College until her death in 1999, wrote the article "The Wreck of the *White Ship*: A Mass Murder Revealed?" in which she suggests that it was possible that someone deliberately steered the boat into the rocks outside of Harfleur. She examines who had the motive for committing the act and finds some interesting evidence.

One obvious suspect would be Stephen of Blois, partly because he left the ship just before it launched, and partly because eventually he would be the one to get the most benefit from the tragedy. King Henry I would have no future legitimate male heir. When he died in 1135 his daughter Matilda was supposed to become the next ruler, but Stephen managed to get the support from the Anglo-Norman nobles and become King. However, Chandler dismisses this motive, as even with the death of William the Atheling it would have been very unlikely that Stephen would have a claim to the throne, and that King Henry, who was a prolific father, had still many years to have more children.

Instead, Chandler finds that another man stood to make great gains from the disaster: Ranulf Meschin. He was a nephew of the Richard, Earl of Chester, one of the most important nobles in the Anglo-Norman realm. Earl Richard was aboard the *White Ship*, as well as several other family members. If they would all die, Ranulf Meschin would be able to claim this inheritance.

Ranulf was on board King Henry's ship when it left Harfleur. Chandler writes:

Ranulf would have needed a co-conspirator on the shore and he had a good one. Among those who, like Stephen [of Blois], disembarked before the ship sailed, was William of Roumare, son of Roger fitz Gerald and Lucy of Bolingbroke. After his father died during William's childhood, his mother had married as her third husband – Ranulf Meschin. Perhaps William and his stepfather saw which passengers were boarding which ships that November day and realized they had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a chance to acquire the earldom of Chester and, as a bonus, to confuse the royal succession, creating a situation for the future in which the holder of such a massive lordship could be a kingmaker.

However, a third person was needed – "an agent on board who could have arranged for the rowers to be drunk and easily misdirected. The identity of this accomplice is provided, with

extreme subtlety, by the chronicler Orderic Vitalis. Among those on his list of victims was William of Pirou [a royal steward], who was in fact alive until at least 1123. How could have Orderic have made such a mistake? Or was it a mistake? Could he have been trying to draw his readers' attention to Pirou? Was Pirou on board the ship when it set sail and found a way to leave it without direction?"

We know that William of Pirou was alive because he appeared as a royal witness to a document on January 7, 1121, a document also signed by Ranulf Meschin. Two years later, Pirou is noted as leaving Portsmouth for Normandy – his name disappears from history afterwards.

Chandler concludes: "How wonderfully convenient it is that the twelfth century has provided us with the very model of the modern murder mystery, even down to the final conclusion that the butler did it. Actually it was the steward, but there is no need to quibble. Probably the most intriguing aspect of the study is that, with the exception of a couple of points of conjecture and interpretation, the whole story is true."

~ Peter Konieczny

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JILIN CITY, China, Nov. 23 (UPI) -- The onset of winter weather in northeastern China covered a row of street-side trees in hard rime, frozen fog that crystallizes on contact with solid objects.

Dashboard camera footage taken Sunday by a man named Mr. Wang along a Jilin Province street near the Songhua River shows the trees covered in frozen fog that solidified into hard rime upon contact with the trees.

The trees line both sides of the road and sparkle as the camera travels down the path.

The hard rime-covered trees are considered a tourist draw in the region and hundreds of people visit each year to drive down the roads lined with glistening trees.

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Julian Barnes on when a young Guy de Maupassant was invited to lunch at the holiday cottage of Algernon Swinburne. A flayed human hand, pornography, the serving of monkey meat, and inordinate amounts of alcohol, all made for a truly strange Anglo-French encounter.

... and to accompany the article a new translation by Elliot Lewis of Maupassant's "L'Anglais d'Etretat".



Portrait of Swinburne by William Scott Bell, painted in 1860 when Swinburne was just 23 years old, 6 years before he'd publish his first book of poems.

In the first half of the 19th century, the British began to discover Normandy. Previously, the point of entry into France for most travellers had been Calais, which felt safely half-English, and where even the beggars importuned new arrivals in their own language. Those prepared to make the longer crossing to Dieppe were rewarded with a greater sense of strangeness: typified by the women in red-and-blue regional costume, clacking sabots and high white coifs that made them look like a cross between chefs and nuns. Hazlitt, passing through in 1824, noted that such headdresses were "much the same as those which the Spectator laughed out of countenance a hundred years ago in England"; and he concluded more generally that "In France one lives in the imagination of the past". For the tourist, this meant antiquities and picturesque ruins within easy reach. The coastline was a further attraction: for those addicted to the new health-kick of sea-bathing, to the gentler pleasures of gambling (the casino at Dieppe opened in 1822), or to painting and sketching. Gradually, the journey from London became quicker – a combination of the London to Brighton railway and the

new steam-packets brought the time down to a mere 11 hours by the 1840s. For centuries Dieppe's main relationship with Britain had consisted of suffering occasional bombardment from the Royal Navy; now there were not just summer tourists, but year-round residents. There was even a quartier des Anglais (on the hill between the Paris road and the chateau), served by an Anglican chaplain and a British consul. And since the French more or less simultaneously decided to make Dieppe a sophisticated destination, the town flourished.

British artists had started coming here as soon as the Napoleonic wars were over. John Sell Cotman delighted in the luminous quality of the Dieppe light (it is an unpatriotic truth that looking north from Dieppe is more visually complex than looking south from Brighton); Turner came several times in the 1820s; Richard Parkes Bonington in the 1830s. We tend to associate the Normandy coastline – Etretat, Pourville, Varengeville, Fécamp – with Monet and the impressionists; but (as with Cézanne and Mont Sainte-Victoire) previous generations of painters had preceded them. Boudin, who later taught Monet the principles, and the necessity, of pleinairisme, painted in Dieppe, as did Corot and Daubigny; while Delacroix came here in 1850 and 1852. His diary contains an unflattering depiction of the English colony, whose invitation he had accepted out of boredom. He went to the salon of a certain

Mrs Sheppard, and the next day rebuked himself: "What a fool you are, getting a sore throat from talking to idiots, arguing with petticoated silliness for a whole evening, with everyone going on about God, and 'the justice of the world' and 'good and evil', and 'progress'!"

Now that the Channel tunnel has restored most traffic to the more northerly crossing, and the ferry service from Newhaven runs at unfriendly hours, Dieppe has sunk back into being largely French again. Serious war damage makes it harder to recreate in the mind the century – from 1815 to 1914 – during which the town became so fashionable. By the 1850s it had "the smartest and most popular place in France"; the casino was rebuilt at regular intervals, each time more extravagantly; the British laid out what was only the fourth golf course in France, while the Paris crowd came down for steeplechasing at the new racetrack. The Prince of Wales kept a mistress and perhaps an illegitimate child in Dieppe; Lord Salisbury, while prime minister, built himself a chalet outside the town and maintained that, thanks to the telegraph station at Beachy Head, he was in better contact with London than if he had been on a Scottish grouse moor.



Autochrom photograph of holiday makers relaxing on the beach at Dieppe, ca. 1895

Simona Pakenham, who chronicled Dieppe's Anglo-French entente in *60 Miles from England* (1967), commented tartly that "The English colony was generally indifferent to any form of culture". But the French needed the arts as the British needed sports. So Liszt played at the Bains Chauds; Meybeer came; Rossini composed an operetta for the theatre. By the end of the 19th century, the casino summer band was recognised as the best in the country, since it was filled by Parisian orchestral players on holiday. In 1907, one of its violists was promoted to conductor, and surprised everyone by directing all Beethoven's symphonies from memory: this was Pierre Monteux, who six years later conducted the

premiere of *The Rite of Spring*.

Not all the British visitors were philistines. The town was Sickert's second home for several decades; and the British feature strongly in the impressive (and highly cosmopolitan) list of belle époque visitors to the town. These include Monet, Pissarro, Whistler, Degas, Renoir, Beardsley, Conder, Fritz Thurlow (the Norwegian painter), Henry Harland (the editor of *The Yellow Book*), William Rothenstein, Proust, Saint-Saens, Fauré, Debussy, Maeterlinck, Puvis de Chavannes, Percy Grainger, Adelina Patti, George and Gerald du Maurier, Ernest Dowson, George Moore, Max Beerbohm, Annie Besant, Marie Tempest, John Barrymore and Gladys Cooper. The night boat of May 20 1897 brought Oscar Wilde, freshly sprung from Reading jail and carrying the manuscript of *De Profundis*. It is a small but interesting footnote to the history of the Dieppe ferry terminal that the two most noteworthy events there both involved pseudonyms. In 1848 Louis-Philippe, the last king of France, heading for exile in England, was hustled aboard a packet of the General Steam and Navigational Company bearing a passport in the suspiciously ordinary name of William Smith. Half a century later,

Wilde came ashore, cloaked in the look-at-me alias of Sebastian Melmoth.

The British brought trade, money and work to Dieppe; they laid the railway, and built the town's station with English bricks. Neither race was or is as hospitable as they like to imagine themselves, but a working cordiality existed between the French and the British. The portrait painter and socialite Jacques-Emile Blanche (1861-1942) operated for many years as a one-man diplomatic service, summering in Dieppe and wintering in London: his studio, just beneath the walls of the castle, was used by Degas, Whistler, Sargent, Boldini, Sickert, Conder, Beardsley and Helleu. "My dear friend," Henry James said to Blanche, "Your Dieppe is a reduced Florence, every type of character for a novelist seems to gather there" – not that the Great Dieppe Novel was ever written. Such Anglo-French conviviality was helped by a willingness to speak one another's language. Sickert was regarded as "un vrai Dieppois", even managing the local fisherfolk's patois; Wilde and Dowson both spoke and wrote excellent French. So did an English poet whose passing residence along the coast in 1868 led to one of the stranger Anglo-French literary encounters, one that echoed on for decades, in France at least. It also encapsulated the way the French preferred to see the British – and perhaps still do.



Agitated Sea at Etretat, by Claude Monet from 1883, depicting the famous rocky archway through which Swinburne was swept out to sea in 1868.

Etretat, some 50 miles west of Dieppe, has become a high point of pilgrimage for the artistic faithful, who gather above its white cliffs – especially the one that curves down into a great chalk flying-buttress – to compare eroded reality with visual memories of Monet's pictures. By 1868 the impressionists had not yet arrived: Etretat was a fishing town that also attracted a certain number of tourists and summer residents. Among their number that year were the 18-year-old Guy de Maupassant and his mother (the family chateau of Miromesnil, where Guy had been born, was a few miles outside Dieppe). The water and its attendant pursuits – swimming, boating, rowing – were to become a

thematic constant in Maupassant's life and work; so it's appropriate that the water was what provoked the encounter between this muscular, boastfully heterosexual French prose writer and a petite homosexual English poet: Algernon Charles Swinburne.

Swinburne, then aged 31, was staying outside the town in a low thatched cottage belonging to his friend George Powell. The people of Etretat had Frenchly decided that Powell was a milord – even if one modestly concealing his real identity under his mother's maiden name. (In fact, Powell was his real name, and he was uncoroneted. He was brought up on the family estate at Nanteos, near Aberystwyth, went to Eton and Oxford, and died at 40.) Maupassant later wrote that Powell's "solitary and bizarre" way of life had astonished the local bourgeois and mariners who were "little used to British fantasies and eccentricities"; he himself was to be afforded a closer look at what such Britishness consisted of.

One September morning, Swinburne went swimming from the beach at Etretat and got into difficulties. According to Powell, treacherous undercurrents had carried the poet out to sea “through a rocky archway” (that very cliff formation Monet later celebrated). Ten minutes later Powell heard shouts from the clifftop that a man was drowning. He ran to the water’s edge, and after a few minutes received the news that Swinburne had been safely picked up by a fishing smack heading for nearby Yport. The poet, writing to his mother (and doubtless downplaying the event), described “a real sea adventure” in which he had been swept two miles out: “Luckily I was all right but very tired, and the result was that I made immense friends with all the fishermen and sailors about – who are quite the nicest people I ever knew.” Maupassant, who was somewhere near the scene, claimed that the poet had been “dead drunk” (despite it being ten o’clock in the morning); also, that he himself had gone out in one of the rescue boats; alternatively, that he had at the very least waded into the water and got soaked to the waist.



Photograph of Maupassant taken by the famous portrait photographer Felix Nadar, ca. 1888, 20 years after his encounter with Swinburne at the Chaumière de Dolmancé.

Whatever the specifics of the near-drowning and the rescue, Maupassant received an invitation to lunch the next day from the grateful Powell. According to Swinburne (again writing to his mother), the place where they lived was an idyllic retreat: “Powell has got the sweetest little farmhouse fitted up with music, books, drawings, etc ... and of course he pokes me into the nicest room ... There is a wild little garden all uphill, and avenues of trees about. The sea is splendid, and the cliffs very like the Isle of Wight – two arches of rock each side of the bay, and one needle only, exactly like half the Freshwater pair.” Maupassant described his visit to the cottage on three separate occasions: orally to Flaubert, Alphonse Daudet and Edmond de Goncourt in February 1875, an account that Goncourt transcribed into his *Journal*; in a newspaper article of November 1882 for *Le Gaulois* (“L’Anglais d’Etretat”)¹; and in his introduction to the French translation of Swinburne’s *Poems and Ballads* in 1891. Though the versions overlap and at times contradict one another, the main story line would have been enough to send the honest burghers of the Isle of Wight scaring up

the libel lawyers.

Maupassant noted “an inscription over the door which I didn’t read on that first occasion” – though if he had, he would have known more what to expect. There were pictures everywhere, some “splendid”, others more like “the imaginings of a lunatic”. Powell was short and fat, Swinburne short and thin, “with a pointed face, a hydrocephalous forehead, pigeon-chested, agitated by a trembling which affected his glass with St Vitus’ dance, and talking incessantly like a madman.” Here and there were laid out displays of bones; while a flayed human hand, supposedly that of a parricide, was the bohemian equivalent of a talking point. A large pet monkey was noisily present, being “titillated” by Powell, and trying to shove Maupassant’s head into his glass whenever he took a drink. Lunch included what the Frenchman assumed to be some kind of fish; though when he asked its name, his host “replied with a peculiar smile that it was meat, and I could not get any more out of him.” The fact that spirits rather than wine were served with lunch also struck the young Frenchman as

peculiar – though perhaps was not all that surprising. Many of the British who were attracted to France at this time (not just artists and writers, but bankrupts, runaway fraudsters and bogus priests, mixed up with respectable folk seeking to make a pension stretch further than it did in England) were struck by the cheapness of French spirits – which also, of course, made them drunker quicker.

After lunch the two Englishmen brought out some gigantic portfolios and showed young Guy – perhaps in a misguided attempt to groom him – pornographic photographs taken in Germany, all of male subjects. “I remember one of an English soldier masturbating on a pane of glass.” Powell was by this time very drunk, and kept sucking the fingers of the flayed hand (which was apparently used as a paperweight). A young servant came in, and the portfolio was swiftly closed. In these exotic and ghoulish surroundings, the conversation proceeded at the highest cultural level. Swinburne, who had published his first series of *Poems and Ballads* two years previously, and was already notorious in his own country, displayed “an immense fund of learning”. He translated some of his poems into French for Maupassant’s benefit, and enthused about Victor Hugo (whose entry in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* he was subsequently to write). Powell for his part had been to Iceland and brought back a store of old songs and legends which he had translated. The two men struck Maupassant as “singularly original, remarkable and bizarre”, a pair of hallucinatory visionaries in the tradition of Poe and ETA Hoffmann. “If genius,” he concluded, “is, as people say, a kind of delirium of the higher intelligence, then Algernon Charles Swinburne is assuredly a genius.”



Caricature of Swinburne by
“Ape” Carlo Pellegrini,
featured in *Vanity Fair*,
November 1874.

Maupassant accepted a second invitation to lunch a few days later. This passed more peacefully, since the intrusive monkey was now dead, hanged from a tree by the young servant. Powell had ordered a huge block of granite for its tomb. At the end of the meal the two visionaries gave the Frenchman some liquor which nearly knocked him out; taking fright, he fled back to his hotel. Even so, he made one last visit, in the course of which he drew attention to the inscription above their door. It read: Chaumière de Dolmancé (Dolmancé’s Cottage). Maupassant asked the Englishmen if they knew who Dolmancé was (the hero and homosexual corrupter of Sade’s *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*). They said that indeed they did. “Then that is the sign of the house?” Maupassant asked. “If you like,” they replied, “with terrifying expressions on their faces.” The Frenchman again fled, avoiding Swinburne and Powell thereafter.

The account in the *Goncourt Journal*, as translated and edited by Robert Baldick (OUP, 1962), breaks off at this point. Perhaps for reasons of space, but more likely for reasons of taste in that only just post-Chatterley era, the rest of the French text was excised. In it, Maupassant continued:

Yes, they lived there together, satisfying themselves with monkeys or with young servant lads of fourteen or fifteen, sent out to Powell from England every three months or so: little servant boys of exquisite cleanness and freshness. The monkey that slept in Powell’s bed and shat in it every night was hanged by the

servant boy, partly out of jealousy but also out of annoyance at having to change the sheets all the time. The house was full of strange noises and the shadows of sadism; one night, Powell was seen and heard firing a revolver in the garden at a black man. Those two were real Sadeian heroes, who wouldn't have held back even from crime. Then this house, so full of living mystery, was suddenly silent, suddenly empty. Powell just disappeared, and no one knew how he had got away. No carriage was ever called for him, and no one had met him on the roads.

This is a rather novelistic ending, perhaps unsurprising given that Maupassant had had seven years to work up the story, and that it was being both told, and written down, by a fiction writer. At other times he ended the story differently. The 1882 account concludes with Maupassant going back to the Sadeian cottage a couple of years later, discovering that its contents were being sold off, and buying, as a souvenir of the two Englishmen, the parricide's flayed hand. The block of granite had by now been raised into the monkey's sepulchre, and the incident with the revolver is given fuller explanation. It was the young servant who was black, and it was he who was being shot at by an enraged Powell for having hanged the monkey. "Afterwards, the lad wandered around for days without food or a roof over his head, and then reappeared and began to sell barley-sugar in the streets of Etretat. He was finally expelled from the district after having very nearly strangled a customer who complained about his goods."

Maupassant's later versions also elaborate on the suspicious protein the Englishmen served. In his 1882 account, he strongly suspects that it might have been monkey, not least because it was said to be common knowledge in Etretat that "this Englishman [Powell] ate only monkey – boiled, roasted, sautéed, or in a confit". By the time of the 1891 account, Maupassant claims he had knowingly eaten spit-roasted monkey – indeed, the joint had been ordered in his honour from a purveyor of exotic meats in Le Havre. However, "The mere smell of the dish as I entered the house made me feel queasy, and the dreadful taste of the animal permanently removed all subsequent desire ever again to repeat such a meal."

This gastronomic queasiness did not imply any broader moral or social revulsion; quite the contrary. Maupassant, doubtless hoping to provoke readers of *Le Gaulois*, concluded his 1882 account thus: "The world would be a lot jollier if one came across ménages like that one a little more often." He certainly played up the theme of the innocent young Frenchman (even if one already alive to Sadeian reference) falling into a nest of genial English perverts intent on displaying national characteristics. Goncourt deliberately drew on Maupassant's description of Swinburne and Powell when writing his novel *La Faustin* (1882), in which an 18th-century English sadist called George Selwyn not only displays many of Swinburne's mannerisms, but also happens to retire to a cottage on the coast called Chaumière de Dolmancé. However, all of Maupassant's versions, despite their dwelling on perversity, are underpinned by deep admiration for the duo: for their literary and artistic passion, their rejection of bourgeois living, their recklessness and bravado.

The French have traditionally regarded biography as a rather low form, being either mere gossip, or at best a reductive process, one that tethers the work to the life, rather than recognising the extent to which the work flies free of it. The Anglo-Saxon tradition is more



Painting of Swinburne by Gabriel Dante Rossetti, 1862.

tethering and more moralising; the biographer's overt or tacit intention too often being, as John Updike has put it, to "reduce celebrities to a set of antics and ailments to which we can feel superior". Whereas it never occurred to Maupassant to feel superior, or think that Swinburne's extravagant life in any way invalidated, diminished or necessarily coloured his work. This is partly a matter of Flaubertian aesthetics; partly the consequence of how the French saw, and to some extent still see, the British. They think of us as polite, unspontaneous beings trained to such control and self-control that sometimes the lid has to blow off, both in art and life. Hence our personal eccentricities and a line of artistic non-conformity. Contemporary British writers are still being fitted into this historic schema. I remember once trying to keep a straight face when a French journalist, seeking to

place me in my proper English context, proposed that my key literary ancestors were Laurence Sterne, Lewis Carroll and Monty Python. Of course I enthusiastically agreed.

Maupassant never doubted that Swinburne was a genius. "He is a poet of exalted and frenzied lyricism, who is not in the least interested in the humble, decent reality which contemporary French artists obstinately and patiently seek; rather he strives to depict dreams and subtle thoughts which are sometimes ingenious and grand, sometimes inflated, but even so magnificent." And it was the same when other British writers and artists of the time came up for French description and judgment. The French expected them to behave in peculiar ways, but declined to allow amusement or shock at their habits to affect aesthetic judgment. Jacques-Emile Blanche wrote of Sickert living in Dieppe for "thirty years, married, divorced, remarried, widower, or about to remarry", moving between smart society and the obscure lodgings he shared with a red-haired fishmongress, and doing crazy things such as cutting off his hair to surprise a small girl; and in all those 30 years nobody ever saw him paint. None of this stopped the French accepting him as a true Dieppois and a true artist: "He was to be the painter of Dieppe. No other artist so perfectly felt and expressed the character of the town, whose Canaletto he has become." Degas's judgment on Wilde, after the 28-year-old Oscar had visited the painter's Paris studio, was: "He behaves as if he's playing Lord Byron in some suburban theatre." Goncourt called Wilde *un puffiste* (a braggart, a blagger), and thought even his homosexuality wasn't particular to himself, but imitative, if not plagiaristic: he had copied it from Verlaine, and also from Swinburne. The diarist Jules Renard wrote cuttingly, "He has at least the originality of being an Englishman" – the French never quite got hold of Wilde's Irish connection. But while they saw him as a false human being, they judged him a true poet.

The British who disembarked at Dieppe the century before last were often surprised by the cheerful affability of the people they encountered. When Hazlitt was staying in Dieppe, "A man and woman came and sang 'God Save the King' before the windows of the Hotel, as if the French had so much loyalty at present that they can spare us some of it." (Hazlitt correctly noted that a reciprocal gesture beneath the windows of a Brighton or Dover hotel would be highly improbable.) A year after the incident at Etretat, Swinburne returned to stay with Powell

at the Chaumière de Dolmancé once again. In the town, he was “rather astounded at finding myself rushed at, seized by the arms and legs, hoisted and cheered, and carried all down the street with shouts of welcome, by the fisher folk and sailors who knew me again at once”. Powell said to him, “Why, don’t you know you’re their hero?” – a status Swinburne thought unmerited by the mere act of not quite drowning.

The poet memorialised his time on the Normandy coast in two ways. For the rest of his life he kept the “outsize garments” (outsize because he was so tiny) in which the rescuing fishermen had dressed him. And in his 1883 collection, *A Century of Roundels*, he published a poem called “Past Days”:

Above the sea and sea-washed town we dwelt,
We twain together, two brief summers, free
From heed of hours as light as clouds that melt
Above the sea.

The poem is partly a lament – for the dead Powell, and for passing time; also an idyll recreating “the days we had together” among “The Norman downs with bright grey waves for belt” and the “bright small seaward towns”. It is singularly lacking in references to monkey meat or Sadeian practices. Despite Swinburne’s considerable reputation in France, it seems that he and Maupassant never again met. What Maupassant, or his heirs, did with the flayed human hand is not recorded.

1. [Maupassant’s 1882 short story “L’Anglais d’Etretat” has been translated into English by Elliot Lewis especially for The Public Domain Review, and is published under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 license]

Julian Barnes is the author of three books of stories, books of essays, a translation of Alphonse Daudet’s In the Land of Pain, and numerous novels, including Metroland

published in 1980. His recent publications include Pulse, a collection of short stories, and The Sense of an Ending, winner of the 2011 Man Booker Prize. In France, he is the only writer to have won both the Prix Médicis and the Prix Fémina, and in 2004 he became a Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. In England his honors include the Somerset Maugham Award and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize. He has also received the E. M. Forster Award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters and the San Clemente literary prize. In 2011 he was awarded the David Cohen Prize for Literature. Awarded biennially, the prize honours a lifetime’s achievement in literature for a writer in the English language who is a citizen of the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland.

Links to Works

- *The Englishman of Etretat* (1882) by Guy de Maupassant
 - Translated into the English by Elliot Lewis
 - French original

- *The Poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne*, in 6 volumes (1904)
 - Volume 1 – *Poems and Ballads*
 - Volume 2 – *Songs Before Sunrise* and *Songs of Two Nations*
 - Volume 3 – *Poems and Ballads (2nd and 3rd series)* and **Songs of the Springtides*
 - Volume 4 – *Tristram of Lyonesse*, *The Tale of Balen*, *Atalanta in Calydon*, and *Erechtheus*
 - Volume 5 – *Studies in song*, *Century of roundels*, *Sonnets on English dramatic poets*, and *The Heptalogia*
 - Volume 6 – *A Midsummer Holiday*, *Astrophel*, *A Channel Passage* and *Other Poems*

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By Chloe Hadjimatheou BBC News, Greece

- 26 November 2015
- From the section Magazine



Grave plots

Cemeteries in Greek cities are so overcrowded that bodies are often only kept in the ground for three years. Then families have to pay for exhumation - and for the bones to be kept in a building known as an ossuary. But many cannot afford to pay even for this limited degree of dignity in death.

Katerina Kitsiou stands weeping by her father's grave in Thessaloniki's main cemetery. She has come to watch as her father Christodoulos is

exhumed.

He was buried seven years ago, but his children cannot pay for his grave any longer.

"We paid for an extra four years to keep him there but we cannot afford it any more," says Katerina.

It's clear that for her the occasion is deeply upsetting.

"It's your beloved. You imagine him like a person and then you see only the bones. It's like a second funeral."



Katerina Kitsiou and her brother Kostas at their father's grave

Image caption

This is something most Greeks know they will have to face at some point in their lives - most feel obliged to attend the event out of respect to the dead.

Over the last 50 years, Greece's urban population has exploded. More than half the country's people are now concentrated in the two

biggest cities, Athens and Thessaloniki. Urban development has left cemeteries encircled, with no room to expand.

That's why graves are now usually rented on a three-year lease with an escalating price scale for any additional years. The prohibitive costs are meant to act as a deterrent so that the space can be reused.

Petros Bakirtzis, one of the cemetery's gravediggers, currently averages 15 exhumations a week. Each is started off by a mechanical digger, then Bakirtzis jumps into the hole and finishes the job with his spade.

Sometimes no relatives come to watch. He talks as he exhumes another body.

"It is lucky this one has fully decomposed. I was a bit worried you might have to see something nasty," he says as he begins gathering up the human remains.

A long black sock with a shoe on the end is removed from the earth with the shin bone still inside and the suit jacket is shaken for the bones to fall out. The remains are piled up on a simple white sheet and the clothes tossed into a large green wheelie bin next to the mound of rubble and earth by the grave.

At least a quarter of bodies exhumed after three years have not yet fully decomposed - a problem which sometimes arises, it's said, when the deceased person was treated with chemotherapy or other drugs which may help preserve the corpse.

Most other European countries have helped reduce the burden on cemeteries by introducing the option of cremation - more than 75% of people in the UK and Denmark opt for cremation rather than burial.

In 2006 a law was passed allowing for crematoria to be built in Greece but the powerful Orthodox Church is vigorously opposed, and nearly 10 years later the country still does not have one.

The church teaches that a body must be buried in order to be resurrected at the second coming. Archbishop Anthimos of Thessaloniki, argues that cremation is the rendering of a human being into nothingness.

"The Orthodox Church cannot accept cremation. Are we going to deny the teachings of the gospel after 2,000 years?" he says.

He rejects the idea that bones left in the ground will eventually decompose, turning to dust that is no more ready for resurrection than the ash of a cremated body.

And he seems to be unaware that most Greeks buried these days are exhumed. "I've been repeatedly to the main cemetery and I have never seen an exhumation," he says.

It is possible, just, for Greek people to cremate their relatives - by transporting them to the nearest crematorium, in Bulgaria.



Archbishop Anthimos of Thessaloniki



Yannis Boutaris

My mother told me not to let the worms eat her

Yannis Boutaris, Mayor of Thessaloniki

The Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yannis Boutaris, one of the country's biggest wine producers, has done it with his

mother and wife.

"My mother told me not to let the worms eat her," he says with a small laugh.

"I keep some of my wife's ashes in a small box in my cupboard and when I open it to get dressed each morning I stroke them a little."

The Church won't carry out a funeral service if it knows the body will be cremated, so people often pretend a burial will take place later, somewhere else. In Boutaris's case, the issue was quietly avoided after he asked the priest not to make him lie.

Boutaris wants to open Greece's first crematorium next year, but he has yet to secure funding and his chances of success don't look good.

Usually after an exhumation the bones are washed and placed in a small metal box. The law prevents human remains being kept outside the confines of a cemetery so they are housed in an ossuary, a vast building resembling an archive with filing cabinets full of bones.



Ossuary

Relatives come and visit the bones, occasionally removing them from the box to pay their respects or to enable a priest to bless them.

But the ossuary incurs a rental charge and for Greeks already unbearably squeezed by years of economic crisis and austerity, that can cost too much, particularly if they have more than one deceased relative.

If the relatives don't show up for an exhumation or stop paying rent at the ossuary the bones are thrown into something called the "digestive pit", a vast underground mass grave. Here there is no ceremony, as the gravedigger tosses the remains on top of tens of thousands of others.

But even these pits are filling up. In the 3rd Cemetery in Athens the digestive pit is full and there is no room for a new one, so boxes full of bones are stacked up in sheds.

For hard-pressed Greeks, the problems begin even before the body is buried. The Association of Funeral Directors of Athens estimates that around a third of the population struggles to pay for their loved ones' funerals.

"People used to consider it a matter of pride to put money aside so they could have a decent funeral," says the association's head, Nasos Kostopoulos.

"Now they spend those savings on helping out their unemployed children."

Four of Athens's main hospitals have reported bodies lying in the mortuary with the families unwilling to claim their loved ones for fear of incurring unmanageable funeral costs. One hospital said it was averaging one unclaimed body a week.



Gravestones

"It's incredibly painful for families who cannot pay for the funeral of their loved one especially because burial is considered something holy here in Greece," says Maria Tsikaloudaki, of the Attiko General Hospital.

"But we have reached a point in the crisis where families do not even try to hide their economic hardship any more."

The director of the Elpis Hospital, Theo Giannaros, says cemeteries are sometimes unwilling to accept paupers

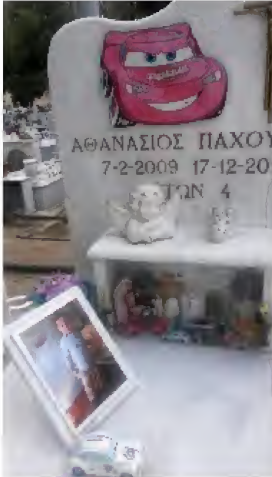
because they are obliged to provide free grave plots.

"A few years ago we had a body here for months because no cemetery would take him," he says.

"I had to threaten to take the body to their Mayor's office if he was not taken off our hands."

At Athens's 3rd Cemetery pauper burials have increased so dramatically since the crisis began that the area usually set aside for unmarked graves has filled up. Now weed-covered graves, distinguishable only by their shape, are dotted all over the cemetery grounds.

Despite this, one cemetery employee told the BBC that some of the biggest cemeteries in Greece still generate an income of up to 8m euros per year for the local government.



Nikos Pahoumis' child's grave

The ordeal of exhuming a dead child may be even worse than exhuming a parent.

One of Thessaloniki's most successful funeral directors, Nikos Pahoumis has attended thousands of exhumations but nothing can prepare him for the forthcoming exhumation of his own son.

When he died nearly three years ago from leukaemia, Pahoumis and his wife were considering cremation but a priest persuaded them to opt for burial instead. Pahoumis cannot even bring himself to visit the grave, however, and despairs of the idea that he will have to see his son's remains dug up.

"We buried him with his toys and other personal items which obviously won't have decomposed," he says.

"It's a very psychologically painful thing to have to experience."



Digestive pit

Katerina Kitsiou recalls how she often visited her father's grave, propping a lit cigarette in the earth where she imagined his head might be so that she might have a smoke with him.

"I wanted him to rest eternally, this is the purpose of burying him," she says, looking into the hole where her father's grave used to be.

"People have to know this is a problem. It's unacceptable."

She draws some comfort from the idea that she can visit her father's bones in the ossuary but eventually he too, like the majority of people, will end up in the digestive pit.

Greeks have had to accept the pain and uncertainty that comes with a financial crisis. In many cases a sense of dignity in death is also being denied them.

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Witch burning rebels stoke Central African Republic violence

By Tom Esslemont | Reuters – 21 hours ago

news.yahoo.com



An anti-Balaka soldier holds a handmade gun as former child soldiers wait to be released in Bambari, Central African Republic, May 14, 2015. REUTERS/Emmanuel Braun

• Reuters/Reuters - An anti-Balaka soldier holds a handmade gun as former child soldiers wait to be released in Bambari, Central African Republic, May 14, 2015. REUTERS/Emmanuel Braun

By Tom Esslemont

BANGUI (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Rebels in Central African Republic have kidnapped, burnt and buried alive "witches" in public ceremonies, exploiting widely held superstitions to control areas in the war-torn

country, according to a leaked United Nations report.

The report by U.N. human rights officers, seen exclusively by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, contains graphic photographs of victims tied to wooden stakes being lowered towards a fire as well as the charred torsos of those subjected to the ritual.

The torture took place between December 2014 and early 2015 under instruction from leaders of the mainly Christian "anti-balaka" militia that has been fighting Muslim Seleka rebels across the country for more than two years, said the report.

Central African Republic was plunged into sectarian violence when Muslim rebels briefly seized power in the largely Christian country in March 2013, with escalating violence on both sides creating lawlessness nationwide outside the capital Bangui.

Internationally-backed presidential and parliamentary elections are due to be held on Dec. 27 after repeated delays to replace a transitional government but there are widespread concerns of more bloodshed in the run-up.

While belief in witchcraft is common throughout Africa, U.N. researchers said it appeared Christian rebels had used these superstitions to intimidate, extort money and exert authority over lawless areas.

"Sorcery is firmly entrenched in (Central African Republic) and ... the absence of state authority creates a breeding ground for a sort of popular justice twisted by anti-balakas to its benefit," said the researchers.

The report, produced by a team working for the U.N.'s stabilisation mission known as

MINUSCA, said 13 attacks against victims aged between 45 and 70 are said to have taken place near Baoro in Nana-Mambere, one of 14 prefectures in the country.

Nana-Mambere in the country's south west has been ravaged by violent clashes between rival rebel groups with U.N. peacekeeping forces unable to restore calm.

The report identifies three leaders of the anti-balaka faction in Nana-Mambere present during the alleged torture sessions but attempts by the Thomson Reuters Foundation to reach them did not elicit a response.

"FASTENED LIKE A CHICKEN"

In one incident, a local Christian clergyman, who had scars across his body, said he tried to intervene as he witnessed a man being buried alive after being condemned as a witch for apparently admitting to killing 150 people.

"The clergyman was threatened at knifepoint for trying to intervene in matters that did not concern the church," an eyewitness was quoted as saying in the report.

Victims were ordered, sometimes at gunpoint, to pay between 20,000 and 50,000 Central African Francs (\$30 to \$80) in bribes to avoid being tied up or burned. Nearly two thirds of people in CAR live on less than \$1.90 a day, according to World Bank data.

"Anti-balakas are extorting huge sums from their victims, in exchange for their freedom," the U.N. document said.

Witchcraft is still punishable by law in Central African Republic and jail terms are commonly handed out as punishments with some reports saying half of the country's jails are taken up with those accused of witchcraft.

In September 2010, the High Court in the capital Bangui found four people, including two children aged 10 and 13, guilty of witchcraft and charlatanism, Amnesty International reported.

The recent violence has left the main jail in Bangui almost completely empty but just outside the capital at Bimbo women's prison, five of 18 inmates are held on charges of witchcraft.

"I was accused of killing my husband through witchcraft," said Christelle Ouamanga, 26, in an interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation from the cell she shares with five others.

Ouamanga, nursing her seven-month-old son Dieupuisant in jail, denies murder but said her husband's family accused her of sorcery after his death that she blames on lung disease.

Father Aurelio Gazzera, a missionary working with Catholic charity Caritas in western Central African Republic, said the concept of witchcraft was "aggravated during moments of crisis" such as the ongoing violence.

"Punishment (of those deemed witches) is used as a means by an armed group to impose its

authority," said Gazzera, whose charity is one of the few to operate in Nana-Mambere, around 300 km (200 miles) northwest of the capital.

Interim justice minister Dominique Saïd Panguéndgi, who like all members of the transitional administration is barred from running in the upcoming elections, said judicial reform regarding witchcraft had been slow and not deemed a priority.

"Witchcraft is a question of belief, so we need to train magistrates," he said in his office in Bangui. "But at least the debate (about witchcraft) has begun."

(Reporting By Tom Esslemont, Editing by Ros Russell and Belinda Goldsmith; Please credit the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, women's rights, corruption and climate change. Visit www.trust.org)

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Wolves among us: Five real-life werewolves from history - CNET

by Michelle Starr @riding_red / October 29, 2015 9:29 AM PDT

cnet.com

October 29, 2015 9:29 AM PDT

• byMichelle Starr@riding_red

Werewolf accusations were not entirely uncommon in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Werewolf and witch hysteria sort of developed in tandem. Indeed, some people were even accused of both. Such accusations, and the subsequent confessions and executions, were often politically expedient. But sometimes the fear was absolutely warranted, whether the danger lurked clad in the fur of a wolf or the clothes of a man.

Here, in celebration of Halloween, are five of the most famous werewolves from history.

Content warning: History was awful. This article touches on murder, mutilation, torture, incest and animal cruelty.

The Beast of Gévaudan



gevaudan.jpg

17th century woodcut depicting a hunt for the Beast of Gévaudan.

Public domain

In the 18th century, the former French province of Gévaudan was terrorised by the so-called La Bête du Gévaudan (The Beast of Gévaudan). The Beast was first spotted by a woman tending cattle in the forest

near Langogne in June. Her bulls scared it off, but not long after it attacked and killed a 14-year-old girl. Over the ensuing months, sightings and attacks mounted.

Those who had seen the Beast described a large wolf with unusual red fur streaked with black. And it was prolific. According to a 1980 study, there were 210 attacks in all, 113 of which were fatal.

In 1765, King Louis XV decreed that the French state would help slay the beast.

When the appointed professional wolf hunters, Jean Charles Marc Antoine Vaumesle d'Enneval and his son Jean-François failed to kill the Beast, the king sent Lieutenant of the Hunt François Antoine instead. Antoine slayed three giant grey wolves, yet the attacks still continued.

It wasn't until a local hunter named Jean Chastel shot a wolf on June 19, 1767 that the attacks were declared over.

Nowadays, it is thought that the Beast of Gévaudan wasn't a single wolf at all, but many individual wolves. When France went on a wolf-killing rampage, these wolves were slain, one by one, until none were left and the attacks abated. Not that killer wolves were unusual. According to historian Jean-Marc Moriceau, some 7,600 people were killed by wolves in France between 1362 and 1918.

The Livonian Werewolf



Werewolf devouring children, Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1512.

Public domain

Werewolf confessions could be quite peculiar. Take Thiess of Kaltenbrunn. Living in Swedish Livonia in the 17th century, Thiess was widely believed among his neighbours to be a werewolf who had dealings with the Devil.

Local authorities didn't much care. After all, Thiess was in his eighties. What harm could he do with a few tall tales? But when they brought him in for questioning on an unrelated matter in 1691, he voluntarily began divulging details of his werewolf lifestyle... although with many inconsistencies.

``

According to his account, Thiess had given up lycanthropy 10 years prior to his appearance before the judges in 1691. Before that, he and other werewolves would change into wolves on St Lucia's Day, Pentecost and Midsummer Night by donning

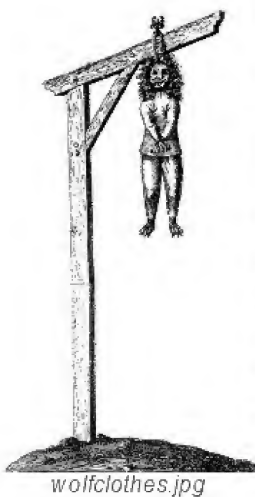
magical wolf pelts (although he later changed his story and said they just stripped naked and turned into wolves).

They would then maraud the countryside, killing farm animals and cooking and eating them (when asked how wolves cooked meat, he declared they were still human, not wolves).

His story only grew stranger. He claimed that werewolves were the agents of God, and would travel to hell to battle the Devil and his witches, bringing back grain and livestock the witches had stolen. In fact, he said, he had done so just one year earlier, contradicting his earlier claim of having renounced lycanthropy.

When it was revealed that Thiess was not a devout Lutheran, and indeed practised a form of folk magic involving charms and blessings, the judges ordered Thiess flogged and exiled. What happened to the strange chap after that is unknown.

The Wolf of Ansbach



[Enlarge Image](#)

A wolf in magistrate's clothing: 1685 woodcut of the wolf on display.

Public domain

In 1685, a wolf was terrorising and killing humans in the town of Neuses in the Principality of Ansbach in what is now Germany. This was not unusual, but the town's chief magistrate Michale Leicht, had just died. He was a cruel and unpopular man, and it was said that the wolf visited Leicht's residence, so it was only a small leap for people to claim the wolf was Leicht, returned as a werewolf for his sins.

The wolf's death was not terribly eventful. The people organised a hunt and chased the wolf into a well and killed it. What they did with its body is pretty macabre, though. They paraded it through the streets, then prepared it for display. They cut off its muzzle, dressed it in human clothes and placed a wig on its head and a mask on its face, so that it resembled Leicht. They then hung the body from a gibbet so that everyone might enjoy the sight.

After, some time, the wolf was removed from the gibbet, and its corpse preserved and put on permanent display at a local museum. Because that's not weird or creepy at all.

The Werewolf of Allariz

Widely thought of as Spain's first ever serial killer, Manuel Blanco Romasanta is unusual for a werewolf, operating late in the mid-19th century.

Actually, Romasanta was an unusual case in a few ways. Born in 1809, he had been raised as a girl until about the age of six, at which point doctors discovered he was male. He grew up, married and worked as a tailor. When his wife died in 1833, he took up the travelling salesman trade, also guiding travellers around Spain and Portugal.



Still from the 2004 film "Romasanta," starring Julian Sands as Manuel Blanco Romasanta.

Fantastic Factory

His first known murder was Vicente Fernández, the constable of León. Fernández was found dead in 1844 after attempting to collect a debt from Romasanta. Rather than face the

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law, Romasanta fled to

Portugal.

During this time, he murdered several people who had hired him as a guide. He was not a cunning man. Romasanta was noticed selling their clothes, and rumours started to circulate that he was selling soap made with human fat. A complaint was lodged and Romasanta was arrested.

He confessed to 13 murders, but here is where it gets wolfish. He said he had been cursed with lycanthropy. But upon being asked to demonstrate his transformation abilities, Romasanta declared that the curse had passed and he was no longer afflicted.

He was actually acquitted of four of the deaths. Those, forensic examination found, had been committed by real wolves. However, he was found guilty of the rest. A phrenological examination of Romasanta by doctors determined that he had invented his "curse", and he was sentenced to death. This was commuted to life imprisonment on the request of a French hypnotist, who believed that Romasanta was suffering a delusion and petitioned a stay of execution so that he might study the man.

An 1863 newspaper reported that Romasanta passed away that year in prison from stomach cancer.

The Werewolf of Bedburg



Composite woodcut by artist Lukas Mayer depicting the events of Stumpp's torture and execution.

Public domain

One of the most famous werewolf cases is Peter Stumpp, a wealthy farmer accused of being a serial murderer, cannibal and werewolf in Rhineland in 1589.

In the years preceding Stumpp's arrest, the country town of Bedburg had been plagued with horrors. It started with dead and mutilated cattle, but bodies of townsfolk were

also soon found in the fields. Initially, it was thought that a wolf or wolves were attacking, but the creatures evaded capture. Finally, in 1589, a hunting party managed to corner the wolf with its hounds. When the humans approached, they saw, according to reports, not a wolf at all. Instead, the hounds had cornered Stumpp.

The most damning piece of evidence was that Stumpp's left hand had been lopped off. The

wolf had had its left forepaw cut off. Since wolf and man had the same injury, wolf and man must be one and the same.

Stumpp confessed, but it's a questionable confession at best. He had been subjected to torture, including the rack. He said he'd made a pact with the devil when he was 12. He had been given a magic belt which allowed him to turn into a wolf. He confessed to killing 14 children and 2 pregnant women. He ate of their flesh and ravished their bodies. He killed his own son, and had a sexual relationship with his own daughter.

He was sentenced to die in the most awful manner. He was fixed to a breaking wheel, and had flesh torn from his body with red-hot pincers. His limbs were broken with the blunt side of an axe so he might not rise from the grave. Finally, he was beheaded. His head was placed on a pole with the figures of a breaking wheel and a wolf on it, as a warning to others.

His daughter and mistress were also flayed, strangled and burned.

It is not known whether the crimes were truly committed by Stumpp. At the time, the region was deeply affected by the Cologne War. Stumpp was a Protestant convert, and the region had been seized by the Catholics in 1857. His death was to the Catholics' advantage, as his considerable wealth would fall to them. In addition, Stumpp's death could have served as a strong warning to other Protestants.

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Wisdom, World's Oldest Known Seabird, Has Been Spotted Again

Posted: 11/26/2015 04:30 PM EST

huffingtonpost.com

Great to see you, Wisdom!



USFWS Pacific/Flickr

HONOLULU (AP) — Federal wildlife officials say the world's oldest known seabird has returned to Midway Atoll.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said Wednesday the Laysan Albatross named Wisdom was spotted at the remote island on Nov. 19.

An ornithologist first put an identification band on Wisdom in 1956. She's estimated to be at least 64 years old,

but she could be older.

Laysan albatrosses typically mate for life, but Wisdom has likely had more than one mate. She has raised as many as 36 chicks.

Breeding albatrosses and their mates will often spend about six months rearing and feeding their young. They forage hundreds of miles out at sea for squid or flying fish eggs.

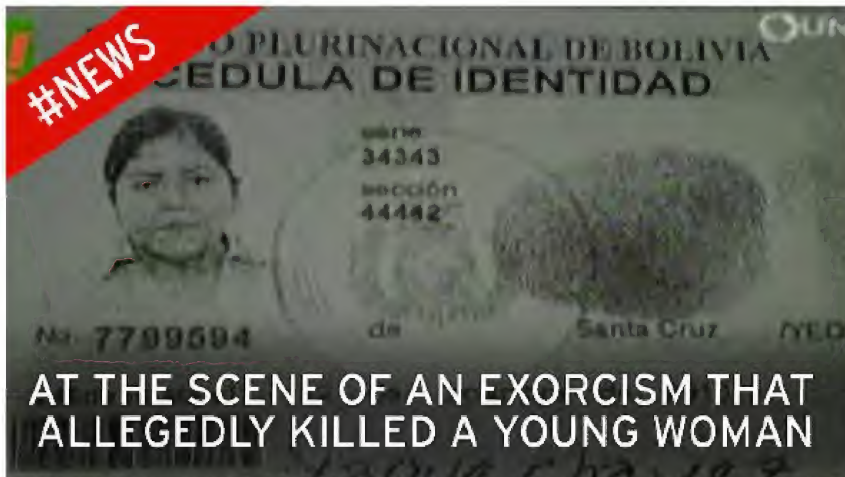
Midway Atoll is about 1,200 miles northwest of Honolulu. It's part of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

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Young woman 'possessed by demon' dies after 'exorcism' performed by family at local church

Her family allegedly performed a ritual after the 22-year-old was said to have played with a Ouija board



22-year-old woman dies and family claim it is because of 'demonic possession'

A young woman died after her parents allegedly performed an exorcism to get rid of the "demon" inside her.

The 22-year-old, named as Jacqueline Sanchez by media in Belize, Central America, died after she suffered a cardio respiratory arrest.

Local media also reported claims that her body had been "lifted" up in the air

inside the church and she had spoken in a man's voice.

They also suggested she had to be forcibly held down as they performed the religious ritual.



Tragic: The 22-year-old died after months of illness, it has been reported

Her parents allegedly believed she had been possessed by a demon after a number of unexplained illnesses in the months before her death.

Read more: Do Ouija boards really work? Mirror Online readers share chilling experiences

She had been suffering from convulsions and hysteria which doctors

at Plan Tres Mil hospital in Santa Cruz, could not diagnose.

This led her parents to believe she had been "taken over" by spirits, after reports that she had played with a Ouija board.

Demon: Her family allegedly believed she was possessed



EJU.TV

She died after she failed to breathe after the apparent exorcism, which took place at the Pentecostal Church of San Ignacio de Velasco.

Read more: Horrifying moment girl "possessed by the devil" screams and convulses after playing Ouija board app

The Special Force to Fight Crime Santa Cruz (FELCC) are investigating her death.

Scene: The church where the alleged "exorcism" took place



EJU.TV

They confirmed she died of natural causes and said that cuts and bruises on her body was due to a "trance".

FELCC spokesman Roger Gutiérrez said: "The forensic report realizes that this girl, identified as Jaqueline Sanchez, died of natural causes due to a cardiac arrest, and the bruises and lacerations to her body (were) due to a trance that he was suffering."

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nessie425

SCOTLAND is taking the day off to worship its water dinosaur, it has emerged.

Saint Andrew's Day is a Scottish bank holiday during which monster-based rituals and sacrifices are thinly disguised behind some vague Bible stuff.

Scotsman Roy Hobbs said: "Saint Andrew' is just another name for the mighty dinosaur, who is also known as 'Auld Snakie' and 'Big Billy

Ness'. It sounds a bit more 'proper', you know? And more human too, I suppose."

Hobbs added: "He is our long-necked master. It is said that our ancestors captured him in their fishing nets, but released him in exchange for the Irn Bru recipe.

"Every year we must give thanks. High priestess Sturgeon will spill a virgin's blood onto the shore of the loch while our bagpipes mimic the mating call of the plesiosaur.

"Then there's a massive piss up, of course."

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